

BALLET

Today

E SHILLING



CEMBER, 1954

BERYL GREY



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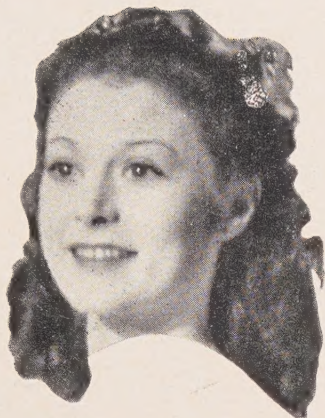
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Ballet Today

EDITOR: PETER CRAIG-RAYMOND



The Career of

MOIRA SHEARER

SIX years ago, during a broadcast from the Scottish Regional, Moira Shearer said that, apart from her ambition as a dancer, she hoped one day to be an actress, to learn the technique of the stage, and to be able to play in Shakespeare or Shaw. That was "another ambition—a very long way off, I am afraid, but still real to me."

The opportunity has come much sooner than she might then have anticipated, and though her first tentative efforts in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* have not been too kindly received by the critics—reminiscent of the reception accorded to a young Titania who is now one of our leading actresses—Moira will not mind that. For she never lacked courage, or the capacity for hard work, and was always ready to accept a challenge.

She is not the first artist who has had to choose between home and career, and, being a woman, it is not surprising that she has chosen the former: though in her case, of course, the choice was much less severe—it simply meant the abandoning of a successful career in ballet for the problematic one of the straight stage.

INTENSIFIED

Ballet makes unceasing and exhausting demands on its votaries. Once a play is launched, the actor is free almost until the

curtain rises; a dancer often spends the whole day in the theatre, and is never free from rehearsals, the daily class and special classes, photo calls and dress fittings. These demands increase and become more relentless as a dancer progresses. When she is a ballerina of Moira Shearer's attainment, the struggle for perfection is intensified, and she must work harder to keep all she has gained, for there is more to lose.

It is now nearly two years since she has danced at Covent Garden, and her place in the garland of ballerinas has never been filled, for she danced with a delicate, controlled beauty that was all her own, enchanting and enchanted.

During her first year at Covent Garden, the nineteen-year-old dancer took the principal role in three of the four great full-length ballets, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Coppelia*, and *Lac des Cygnes* and, with Margot Fonteyn and Pamela May, was one of the original trio of danseuses in *Symphonic Variations*. A succession of leading roles came her way, including a new Massine

ballet, and her balletic future seemed very bright indeed. A strong technique, musical feeling and style, speed and precision, combined with great personal beauty, were her special attributes; she also had a talent for burlesque, momentarily revealed but never exploited, in *A Wedding Bouquet*, when she took the part of the demented Julia.

FORTUNATE

Moira Shearer was fortunate in her early background and training, always important matters for a dancer. From her earliest days she heard much talk of literature and art, and both her parents were musical. Moira herself, at one time, thought of becoming a pianist.

She had her first dancing lessons from a pupil of Cecchetti. This was in Northern Rhodesia when Moira was six. When the family returned to England, she became a pupil of Flora Fairbairn, until she was old enough to study with Nicolas Legat. It was in his studio, next to what is now the Sadler's Wells Ballet School that the child Moira first decided that she wanted to be a

dancer. Serge Grigoriev, Diaghilev's lieutenant, had advised her mother to send her to Legat, but though Moira thought dancing was fun, and so was watching ballet, there were many other things she like doing just as well.

Nicolas Legat was the most sought-after teacher in London at that period. In Russia he had been a first soloist at the Mariinski and partner of the great ballerina, Kchessinska, while Pavlova and Karsavina were among his many famous pupils. After the Revolution he settled in England, and his light and beautiful studio over Frank Brangwyn's was the meeting place of musicians, painters, and writers of all nationalities, visited by famous dancers whenever they came to London. Moira's fellow students included Eglevsky, Krassovska, Rostov, Brae, Carter, Inglesby and Kyra Nijinsky.

REALISED

It was in this cosmopolitan atmosphere, where teacher and pupil worked together in the great tradition of Russian ballet, and nothing mattered except the world of art, that Moira began to realise all that world stood for, and what it meant to her. She decided that her greatest wish was to be a good dancer, and live in the world of ballet.

When war broke out, and

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BALLET TODAY for December

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The Triumph of Micheline Bardin

CONCLUDING THE REVIEWS OF THE PARIS OPERA BALLET SEASON AT COVENT GARDEN

AFTER the harsh words I had for Harald Lander's *Napoli*, I can make it all up to him by a loud bravo for his *Etudes*. "Thank God" the thin house seemed to say on October 5, "for something to cheer." The curtain calls must have caused storms backstage, but the dancers deserved them, every one.

Etudes was a personal triumph for Micheline Bardin. She flew through it like an ecstatic, intoxicated bird—glowing, living in the air, all but laughing at the easy pleasure of it all.

In fact, and of course, she danced through some of the most difficult, overfull choreographies ever given to a ballerina: Lander's idea in *Etudes*, first produced to little effect with the uncompetitively-minded Danes in 1947, was to show a child grow from first class to first triumph. The synopsis was faithfully represented by Bardin.

TRIUMPH

Her triumph in this series of classroom enchainment was the more magnificent in that it could (vide Balanchine) have become bogged down by a too literal acceptance of classroom convention. Lander, given the classroom, made of it a ballet stage of light and shade, of technique and flow, of virtuosity and the stage business which can frame young virtuosity.

Etudes is not a ballet so much as a—what can I call it—choreographic workout. No, like representing on stage a Class de Perfection. Legat wrote of Johanssen, and later his, Class de Perfection: "When the floor was prepared I shouted a loud invitation to the dancers, and through the door would float a host of fairies. I could not term our ballerinas otherwise; perfectly groomed, scented and charming, they walked so lightly that their feet scarcely seemed to touch the floor . . ."

INVITATION

That is *Etudes*. A loud invitation to carry the stage before you, to dazzle, to have a house intermittently clapping and the feeling that cheers are come at last. Michel Renault, given scope, showed why he is Renault. Claude Bessy, Josette Clavier and Pierre Lacotte all worked tremendously. I was very impressed by Lacotte who has height and strength in elevation, and a compact body which should make him a great dancer.

During *Etudes* there were ten men on stage, each one superior to the best man that the Wells could muster. This is not a comparison, merely an acceptance. The English simply cannot produce a real male dancer—with a few exceptions. And would, say

Dolin have become Dolin had he worked at the Wells? Or would Gilpin have his current position but for Dolin's coaching? Perhaps this is another argument. Be that as it may, *Etudes* is—as I said—not a ballet. But for a lengthy close-up of magnificent dancers . . . ne plus ultra, or almost.

FINAL PROGRAMME

The final programme of the short season did not greatly re-

cheered the great performance of *L'Oiseau de Feu* is the saddest commentary I could make on the dance audience today.

NO FLUKE

Harald Lander, having already saved the season with his *Etudes*, presented his recent *Printemps a Vienne* to prove it was no fluke. The decor and costumes by Jean-Denis Maillart were sumptuous and beautifully carried out. The choreography of all four tableaux was of the highest and most lyrically inventive standard. I have spoken harshly of Lander in the past, but for *Etudes* and *Printemps a Vienne* I am ready to accord him a high place among

London Ballet In Review

by

Peter Craig-Raymond



pair any damage done to the company's reputation by earlier mistakes.

Lifar's *Romeo and Juliet* deeply shocked me as an example of callous bad taste in treating a classic. Twiddling choreography is little match on stage to Tchaikowski from the orchestra. Dayde and Renault danced extremely well, but the shorthand version of the tragedy is of little credit to Lifar.

As the Faune in Nijinski's *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*, Lifar was only slightly better than he was in his earlier solo attempt. In 1935, yes. Today: perhaps unwise.

Guignol et Pandore remains in the repertoire after ten years. This, and only this, aroused my interest in the proceedings and had me join the audience's laughter. A childish, trite and insulting ballet to offer to any adult audience. It is works such as this which give reason to the artists and audiences outside ballet for their contempt of the dance as an art. *Guignol et Pandore* would not have passed as a puppet show on Hampstead Heath, let alone as a ballet.

That the audience cheered it more enthusiastically than they

contemporary choreographers.

Micheline Bardin again made an impressive appearance, dancing in a softly romantic style for the first tableau with Youly Algaroff. Algaroff's lightness and, again, his elevation stand out.

Josette Clavier and Pierre Lacotte danced the lovers in the second tableau, tenderly and effectively. Liane Dayde as, perhaps, the Spirit of La Marseilles or something, was least helped by Lander, but her zesty polka showed her as a strongly humorous dancer. Danced to Schubert's second, *Printemps a Vienne* is an excellent final ballet for any evening. Both this and *Etudes* might well be taken to other companies by Lander to good effect.

THE FIREBIRD

I have left until the last Nina Vyroubova's performance of the *Firebird*. Unhelped by a dismal stage, Vyroubova made a swift, technically exciting role of the bird. I found her characterization less authoritative than some, but with a youthful surge of spirit which enormously weighed in her advantage.

Youly Algaroff's *Iva* tempted comparisons too dangerous to print. Let me only say that he danced the Prince as the role requires — elevation, strength, command were all his. Christiane Vaussard as the Princess had much more to do in this Lifar version than has the Princess in other comparable versions. Surprising, perhaps, that Sadler's Wells given a Princess such as Beriosova should have given her almost nothing to do. I was also happy to see Wakhevitch dress his Princess as such—and not dower her like her own maidens as if all were a corps de ballet.

The final scene, unfortunately, found Lifar empty of ideas and what—in the recent Sadler's Wells production—was a vastly majestic finale became a total betrayal of the preceding interest. A great pity.

I should very much have liked added opportunities to see this Lifar *Firebird* (and two other of the season's works) but so short was the season that this was impossible.

I hardly think I can quibble with a season, no matter its defects, which brings me an *Etudes*, a *Printemps a Vienne*, and a *Firebird* such as this. The flaws in the repertoire are gaping, the talent enormous, the artistic direction poor, the end results a mixture of the highly interesting and the contemptibly boring.

Ballet Rambert at the Stoll

PRECEDING the Roberto Rossellini production of Honegger's *Joan of Arc at the Stake*, at the Stoll Theatre on October 20 the Ballet Rambert performed act one of *Giselle*.

The audience for Ingrid Bergman was not a dance audience. Ballet Rambert had, for a month, a very powerful potential to do good propaganda work for ballet. A good few thousands of theatre-goers, able to pay quite highly for their seats, were being "forced to sit through" ballet. If what they saw under compulsion was good, they might well come to see ballet for itself next time.

I doubt if any of the Stoll audience do.

LAUGHTER

It was my embarrassment to stand at the back of the auditorium (I came twice, I am now referring to a performance during the second week) and listen to an audience laughing at one of our classic ballets.

I will not mention here the cause of the laughter. The performer was not to blame if he was technically far from competent to handle the role assigned to him. He could hardly refuse it.



Michelin Bardin of the Paris Opera Ballet

DISSERVICE

But Marie Rambert, for I think the first time, has done ballet a major disservice in allowing a performance so poor that an audience far from technically-minded could openly laugh. Here was a houseful of adult theatre-goers, awaiting a performance of mature, intelligent drama. And here was ballet giving all the evidence needed to support the opinion that ballet is a childish, and amateur, amusement.

I hope Marie Rambert has a good reason for having passed such a performance. And I hope she was as hurt as I at the thought of the dancer's state of mind when he heard the deserved laughter.

Yugoslav National Dancers

What to say about yet another group of folk dancers—this time the Yugoslav National Dancers from Zagreb at the Albert Hall on October 3. Apart from two beautiful, semi-Oriental, semi-Magyar songs by Paula Bukovac and two by Bozidar Ivanisevic I find this programme as un-theatrical and repetitious as any of the fifty which have preceded it.

Folk dance, I am sorry to be repetitious myself, is a participant

art, not an entertainment for spectators. What would be wonderful on a summer's night with the Adriatic as a cyclorama becomes, with ten rows of empty pews as a backdrop, a bore.

UNFAIR

This is unfair on the dancers. In their real setting they would succeed so easily. It is like hearing a Louis Armstrong half-drowned beneath the lush of half a hundred violins. He is good, but what a waste!

Dewali Festival Dances

INDIA HOUSE celebrated the Dewali (Festival of Lights) by staging an evening of dancing. The Festival is traditionally celebrated by the lighting of lamps and fireworks. Regrettably, the bushel was too much for the lamps on this occasion and no fireworks were allowed access.

The celebration of Dewali began in 900 B.C. with the coronation of Rama, hero of Ramayana. During the Festival the Goddess Lakshmi (Wealth) is supposed to visit the home and every floor is decorated to welcome her with potted candles, flowers, paintings and chalkings. Similar, I imagine, to the Christian candle-in-the-window tradition.

HACKNEYED

At India House a group of amateur dancers, with one or two obvious professional additions, provided an evening of rather hackneyed dancing with few highlights. Rekha Devi, and Anura, were the only interesting exponents.

With the facilities available to India House I expect a very much more impressive spectacle than this and I see no reason why Dewali should not be celebrated in London in an attractive way. I would also expect that an Indian audience would give more respect to the performers than was in evidence during this evening. The chattering and shuffling throughout the performance was enough to make the Goddess Lakshmi turn about and go home. It certainly would have had that effect upon me had I arrived to be welcomed by such noisy celebrators.

City Ballet Society

THE City Ballet Society, which met with no success at Toynbee-hall, moved on November 5 to the obviously better Arts Theatre Club in Leicester-Square.

Here even the same ballets look better, framed, as they are, so much more suitably. The Arts has been a lunchtime ballet centre before and it would be excellent if ballet could become a permanent mid-day feature of this central theatre.

THE BASIS

Although the City Ballet are far from perfect, they do provide the basis upon which good, new work can be grafted. The Arts could become a West-end showcase for young dancers and new ideas.

The ballet by Peter Darrell which is in this group's Repertoire—*Celeste and Celestina*—begs the question again of why Darrell has not been given a commission by a major company for a new ballet?

WORTH GAMBLE

I am not wholeheartedly awestruck by *Celeste*, but I do think Darrell shows enough thinking in this ballet to make him worth a gamble by a large company. If the Wells are so pro-English, why not Darrell? And, still in questioning mood, why not Michael Hobson as composer? And Douglas Smith shows enough originality (and to a tight budget) in his decorations to make him seem promising as an artist?

Why not a Darrell ballet to Hobson music, decorated by Smith?

Of the dancers, director Philippe Perrottet himself projects best. Juliet Prowse could establish a good stage presence but seems technically wary.

Soviet Dancers at Empress Hall

IF Bedlam has been eliminated from the London entertainments, and our psychiatric problems are now locked away from public sight (and public indignation), we can at least relive the joys of seeing caged animals when the Communist-front organisations bring dancers to "decorate" their baagins.

I care nothing for the celebrations and fund-raising gatherings of these poor people. Platitudes are platitudes whether tinted red, blue or yellow.

NO PROTEST

But no protest can be strong enough for this device of bringing mature artists and plumping them in the middle of a barn to be welcomed by whistling, feet-stamping oafs. Raissa Struchkova and her husband Alexander Lapauri, both principals at the Bolshoi, were so used at the Empress-hall on "the first day of British-Soviet Friendship Month" What a stage for dancers! Three rows of eights behind them, the audience on the other sides, glaring lights showing them making their long entrance through officials and busibodies, falling on the stairs up to the square stage, and the stage itself wrecked by half a hundred previous shoe-clad feet.

After all this: "dance, please."

CAN I ?

Can I criticise dancers under circumstances such as these? Both showed the quite incredible technical strength and impetuosity which we now know to expect from really trained artists as compared to corps de Ballet—trained, competent automatons.

If, sadly, the technical prowess was made (and, for this audience, it had to be) to stand on its own without being integrated with artistic and cohesive choreography: what can one expect?

JUST ONE

But the evidence was enough to prove that Struchkova and Lapauri approach the dance as an art, not as a job to be done adequately. Just one man like Lapauri and the boys of British ballet could go back to their wombs, taking the charlatans who train and praise them along as fitting company.

But cannot Russia send us ballet without the gawky intermediary of these foolish party politicians?

I never cease to marvel at the infantilism of the attempts by British, American and French film producers to show any aspect of ballet. They seem to work on the assumption that the real thing is of no interest, and set out to produce something that reflects what the most stupid and sentimental film-fan imagines ballet to be like: the result is a cliché which makes little effect on the spectator because it differs in no way from all the other backstage clichés he has seen in a hundred other films.

This is so characteristic of the film industry that it happened

MARGOT FONTEYN AT CLOSE QUARTERS

in *The Little Ballerina*, a film made for children that was supposed to have a documentary element and give real picture of ballet. I danced in this film myself, and was horrified to see all the fine ideas get distorted or destroyed in the long journey from script to screen.

Even when something first-rate did get into the can—e.g. a four-minute "take" of Margot

Fonteyn dancing the pas de deux of *Les Sylphides* with Michael Somes—it was cut out of the final film because someone in the higher reaches of the producing company was afraid it would bore the spectators!

STAND IN

The other male dancers were not called on the day when sequences from *Les Sylphides* were being shot; but I was lucky enough to be chosen to stand in

for Michael Somes (being roughly his height and build), and so I had the unforgettable experience of watching Margot Fonteyn from close quarters. Everything was against her: it was a very cold Christmas the hard floor bruised her feet, and small hitches made it necessary for shots to be taken over and over again: and yet she showed nothing but ease and grace the moment the cameras started to roll.

COULD BE

I N Britten's new opera we see the bright centre of the present flowering in English opera. The theme (unlike that of some earlier Britten operas) gives full scope to his highly individual talents, and Myfanwy Piper's libretto is a model of skill and discretion. Moreover the staging by the English Opera Group (with decor and costumes by John Piper, production by Basil Coleman and lighting by Michael Northen) shows the same clear understanding of the synthesis of all the theatrical arts which distinguished the work of Diaghilev in his first two periods. But when I saw *The Turn of the Screw* my pleasure was alloyed with gloomy thoughts; for this remarkable opera showed what was wrong with most of the new ballets of today.

Consider John Piper: as early as 1948 (when he designed the Covent Garden revival of *Job*) he established a claim to be considered one of the finest ballet designers of this century; but since then he has received no ballet commission worthy of his talents. (The magical effects he achieved with colours and lights in *Harlequin in April* were quite wasted on this hodge-podge of half-baked psychoanalysis and phoney mythology). Consider Britten: he has shown over and over again that he has all the equipment of an outstanding ballet composer. Given a theme which appealed to him strongly, I feel sure that he could do for English ballet what Stravinsky did for Russian ballet in *The Firebird* and *Petrouchka*. But at the moment there does not seem much chance that he will ever have the chance of working on a ballet with an English choreographer of corresponding stature, able to talk his language.

I hope I'm wrong in thinking so: I can imagine few things more exciting than a new ballet bringing together Britten, Piper, a great choreographer, and a theme as stimulating as that of *The Turn of the Screw*.



(Photo: Houston Rodgers)

Violetta Elvin

Writes . . .

This month Violetta Elvin returns from her tour, with Sadler's Wells, of France and Italy. In this month's column she writes of ballet in Italy and the gradual rebuilding of interest in the dance there.

art apart from opera.

Finally, during World War II ballet in Italy seemed to die altogether. But then, gradually, at La Scala in Milan and at the Opera in Rome full-scale ballet performances were re-introduced. The shattered companies there were re-formed. From abroad came a sudden influx of touring ballet companies. Guest artists were called to Italy to dance at La Scala and at the Rome Opera and to appear at the yearly May Festivals at Florence. Interest in ballet was awakening again.

La Scala has three new ballet rehearsal rooms under construction now. The theatre's ballet school, directed by Mme. Esmée Bulnes, has more students than ever in recent years. La Scala is planning several new ballet productions for the coming season including *The Firebird* which has been such a great success when revived in England for this year's Edinburgh Festival.

GROWING

Everywhere we danced, in Milan, Rome, Naples, Genoa and Venice the public for ballet seemed to be growing. The visit of the Sadler's Wells Ballet in Italy will have done untold good to further stimulate this interest in ballet.

Margaret Hill who has recently rejoined Ballet Rambert.
(Photo: Derek Smith).

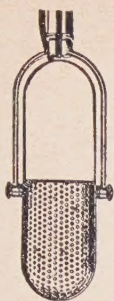


WE are back in England now after our first extensive tour of Italy bringing with us many memories and new experiences. Italy has always fascinated me. Even as a child I used to dream of someday going there. This has been my fifth visit to that country and I am happy to say that this early fascination still lingers as clear and untarnished as on the first day I ever went there several years ago.

How many beautiful theatres there are in Italy! Every major community, every provincial capital, boasts of its opera house and its brilliant operatic seasons. This is the country where hundreds of years ago classical dancing had its earliest beginnings and which later became one of the world's foremost dance centres.

SUBMERGED

Unfortunately, for the fifty years before 1936, ballet had gradually been submerged by opera. There remained little interest for dancing as a form of



CRITIC UNDER FIRE

The first in a series of recorded questionnaires.

"I Think Ballet Has a Great Future . . . In Front of It"

Following the successful run of our "Futures" series of taped arguments last year, I mean to put myself under fire this year and invite several dance writers, starting with Edith Barking, to question me as they wish. These tapes will not be scissored by me and stand exactly as recorded. It is often true that another person, especially one not of the same mind as yourself, may pinprick from you clarifications or further thinking of interest. That is my hope in this series.

EB: Mr. Craig-Raymond, you have for many years been forefronting a plea for something which—for simplicity—I shall call here the "New" ballet. Do you think any progress is being made towards this ideal?

PC-R: Of course. Old people keep dying, young ones keep being born. As long as the birth-rate exceeds the mortality rate I shall be progressing.

EB: And do you think ballet can progress on your lines?

PC-R: I think ballet my way can find a permanent success in the contemporary theatre, yes. I think ballet on the Diaghilev home-and-away plan can never be either artistically creative (as a growing, maturing force) or commercially successful enough in the long run to pay its permanent way.

EB: And if I ask for proof that the current scheme of things is, in fact, not working effectively?

PC-R: Surely you only need to look at London in the past few years? Visiting companies take smaller and smaller houses, the balletomania has developed schizophrenic tendencies not to mention the fear of heights which has always been the average Englishman's besetting stupidity.

EB: Do you, then, seriously state that the English hate talent at the top?

PC-R: The English hate anything at the top in exactly the reverse way to, say, the American's idolatry of everything at the top. Both are extremes, but the English extremity is more dangerous because it is negative—like so much here, including the dance criticism.

EB: A rude question if I may. Answer you English?

PC-R: I'm not a patriot, if that answers you. I want to be accepted, and I myself accept, regardless of accident of mere physical birth. A dancer is a dancer—to paraphrase Stein—and I don't look for GB on the back number plate or for any other identification. A very wise old man said that, "A woman is either beautiful, or not." I don't remember his telling me to check race, creed,

colour and the origin of the visa stamp before agreeing.

EB: You find the London dance audience over-nationalistic?

PC-R: An immoral use of nationalism is made throughout the theatrical field in London. It is no answer to criticism that "after all, it's our own company." I feel no such paternal instinct and I refuse to consider my criticism as either pat-on-the-head when I praise or, when I damn, infanticide. As a critic, I am interested in the good, the progressive, the potential. And neither publicist nor patriot can sway that. I can buy my own brandy and I can wave my own flag—if I so wish; I need no help.

EB: If you feel ballet is so bad, why take it? You have no need to if your published work is a measure of your success? Or do you take ballet as God takes mankind?

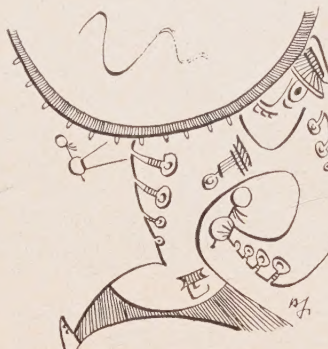
PC-R: Don't say that or I'll have half London misreading it that I called myself God! And I don't feel ballet is "so bad." If I felt other than that the dance is an art form of the greatest possible potential I would have removed myself from it years ago. I love ballet without the drooling narrowness of the affected balletomanes. All I want is my own way. Is that unnatural?

EB: Why not start your own company?

PC-R: Why not buy a controlling interest in General Electric?

EB: Well, of course, money. But would you like to run a ballet company? And if you did would you give up all your writing on ballet?

PC-R: Anyone who wants to get rid of me as a critic sufficiently strongly to give me five million pounds—send a stamped and addressed envelope for receipt now. Naturally I would not write on ballet as a critic while I was running a competitive dance company. One notable example of a critic who is also a salaried employee of a ballet company's affiliate is enough. But, equally certainly, I will not give up writing on the art of ballet until I achieve what I want or fail to achieve it. I won't mind failing. But, thinking as I do,



"do I publicize ballet?"

I would be ashamed to funk the attempt.

EB: Do you do ballet any good?

PC-R: How do you mean? Do I publicize ballet? Yes. Do I beat a drum for it in very public places? Yes. Do I try to make ballet's people into well-known names? I do a share. But I also condemn, I also attack. But then I didn't come into ballet to extend the cordial hypocrisy which half-submerges the art. I came in like a furniture remover in Tennessee Williams: while carrying out the chattels, I'll talk to the sick boy and try to help him see something better than jumping out the window. A sort of one-man anti-suicide division if you like television detective jargon.

EB: After hearing you lecture some time ago, the man with me described you as "Ballet's Billy Graham." Would such an appellation please you?

PC-R: Hardly. Graham is a sincere hypocrite among insincere ones. He knows he must have a slick answer as his bedside manner and the fact that he does know this proves him more intelligent than, superficially, one

would guess. But I'm more like the rural G.P. of old—I know a sickness when I see it and I believe more in a commonsense natural remedy than the ever-change remedies of the overstocked pill-makers. And like the old G.P. I lose my temper if my patient disobeys. Is that bad? Perhaps. But is it so bad as the disinterested blankness of today's over-subscribed doctor?

EB: To keep up the metaphor—*isn't the surgeon better still?*

PC-R: You should know better than to say that to a natureopath like myself! No, the surgeon kills too often whilst looking for casebook material. The G.P., too busy to be busybody, is more interested in reviving his patient's health than getting a percentage from the morticians.

EB: Would you describe your fellow-critics as getting a percentage out of morticianism—is that a word?

PC-R: Sounds like one of mine. No, the other critics are more like selfmade morticians themselves. Better still, call them embalmers who often forget to check the heartbeat before certifying death. I am no pedlar of woe. I think ballet has a great future—in front of it. Too many see the great future behind us. So far I have no eye in the back of my head—but then that would just be a hole in the head, wouldn't it?

EB: I find you unconvertible, then?

PC-R: Yes, but the exchange rate is on my side. And on the side of young, ambitious and idealistic ballet. Remember, too, they're young enough to wait. Even if they only get their way at the wake for their elders—their ballet is tomorrow's, and unlike manana I think it will come fairly soon.

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The Stranger In Our Midst

by
Caryl Brahms



IN THIS, the season of goodwill and the guest on the hearth, and in the light of the abysmal notices "le Ballet d'Angleterre" has received at the hands of the Paris press—a lack of enthusiasm which can only in part be written off as chauvinistic prejudice—let us consider what innovations and modifications we could wish to set in practice when the Sadler's Wells Ballet gets its proud new name.

Or before.

Significant has been the praise of the two young Russian dancers, Violetta Elvin and Svetlana Beriosova. Significant, too, was the disappointment expressed in both *Le Monde* and *La Danse* that no press night had been arranged for Elvin's *Lac des Cygnes* and *Sleeping Princess*.

Polite lip service was paid to the delicate art of Margot Fonteyn whom the French found a little remote and even mechanical at times. The miracle of Fonteyn's cool and unemphatic phrasing, her impeccable musicianship, went for next to nothing in the eyes of the Paris press, accustomed as they have grown to the perpetual overemphasis of the choreography of Lifar.

Nadia Nerina got by on the neatness of her technique and Rowena Jackson's turns were not overlooked.

Alexander Grant was liked, of course, and David Blair was said to show promise.

Our own, shorter ballets were not to the taste of the French, either in music or—and particularly—in decoration.

In short, in the eyes of the Paris press the English Ballet is as dated as the Danish Ballet, and just about as dull.

A DANGER

True it is that in our national ballet the stranger's lot is not an easy one.

Strangers are "different"; and this difference seems to be regarded as a danger to the overall national style of dance. Second-

dary dancers, safe in the uniform of the ordinary, act as a brake upon their uncomfortably outstanding talents. And with Grey coming back and Fifield moving up, it will be tougher than ever at the near-top. Already the atmosphere that can be sensed around them is strongly reminiscent of the Rajah's son in *Pop*. They are different.

PRESS NIGHTS

They are different—granted.

And certainly, had Elvin been presented in Paris under the polyglot and perhaps over optimistic banner of Festival Ballet, she would have got her press nights in Paris. And Beriosova would have been brought forward in more rewarding roles than the Lilac Fairy and the pas-de-deux in the utterly boring first scene of *Lac*.

And while we are on the subject of our Parisian Waterloo, what about the folly of sending our top export, *The Sleeping Princess*, to Paris in settings that were designed in the age of austerity for war-time Sadler's Wells Theatre, in costumes that for all their refurbishing show a lack of imagination which is unprecedented in the many distinguished decors from Messel. Not that his decors for his recent ballet *Homage to the Queen*, which in my opinion are exquisite, were much appreciated the other side of The Sleeve.

ENRICH IT

They are different—granted. But must this difference neces-

Antonio and Rosita Segovia in the film "Neapolitan Fantasy" which is now to be shown in various provincial cinemas and which is reviewed on page fourteen of this issue. Ernest Borneman wrote on the production last month



sarily endanger the National style? Might it not serve to enrich it?

In Russia, of old, the stranger artists in the ballet were treasured, their work admired, even borrowed. Legnani left the Moscovites her *fouettes*, Johannsen and Cecchetti taught them.

From such exchanges both sides benefit and the language of the Dance becomes the more eloquent.

If our corps de Ballet had noted Miss Elvin's port-de-bras the Paris press would not have rated their arms as semaphore sticks. And on her side, Miss Elvin could acquire something more of the English dancers' punctilious batterie. And were they encouraged to take their stage as does Miss Beriosova and seek to treat the Dance as she does, with authority, the English dancer might have escaped the repeated Paris reproach that she lacked personality.

As to our men . . .

Well, I will return to the subject of the English dancer and the Paris press next month.

One word more.

It is not the public that causes the stranger artist to feel alien. Both Elvin and Beriosova can fill their houses in a manner second only to Fonteyn and not achieved by the prissy-missy ballerinas.

It is behind the scenes that an atmosphere is sensed; that high-metalled spirits are broken; that a deadly uniformity is rated above the unique and the brilliant.

BALLET

THERE is no need for the ardent balletomane to chase the world (even if he could afford it) in search of new ballets and dancers; he has only to wait patiently in London and watch the world go by.

Since the end of the war we have seen every important Western ballet company in London: recently even the Iron Curtain has lifted to give us something more than a celluloid glimpse of the Soviet Ballet, while the Paris Opera Company has at last emerged from its rococo fortress to skirmish for two gallant weeks with London balletgoers and critics.

The most interesting feature of these many visits has been to discover how divergently national temperament acts on a traditional style, and how differently that tradition is maintained. To watch a French, American or Russian dancer in the same role is a fascinating experience, and it demonstrates how easy it is to criticize an interpretation just because it does not come within the scope of our own national style of dancing.

BOTHWAYS

Of course this acts both ways: the French find our dancers (apart from Fonteyn) cold and lacking in personality; we think the French acrobatic and unmusical; both of us criticize the Americans for their mechanical efficiency; and the Americans, no doubt, would not find the Soviet dancers as flamboyant and "unclassical" as we do. The answer is that the classical style is not something rigid, but exists with intriguing variations throughout the world. Each school can learn from the other; they speak the same language although with different accents, and none has the right to maintain that it alone represents pure classicism.

A rare dancer—Fonteyn, Ulanova or Chauvire—perhaps; but no single national style, conditioned as it is by temperament and historical background, has the right to claim supremacy over any other.

This is often forgotten.

FORGOTTEN

It is forgotten both by the chauvinistic supporters of Sadler's Wells, many of whom never see a foreign company for more than one performance, and then with contempt or polite condescension; and also by the gallant but dwindling band of ballet-snobs for whom the only ballet is—of course—the "Russian Ballet", even though (as was the case with Col. de Basil's last

AT THE PARISH PUMP

company) it may be largely composed of French and American dancers, or be a modern group of Soviet artists who both in style and in the manner of their presentation bear no relationship to the Diaghilev Ballet which these people so fondly recall together with their own youth.

TO LEARN

It is as well, therefore, to look at our own national style in classical ballet before being too eager to condemn that of other nations. While we criticize the faults of other dancers—French, American or Russian—we are often inclined to forget how much we have to learn from them.

Because a Soviet dancer presents us with the notorious "broken wrists" (about which so much nonsense has been written recently), it is well to remember that she shows more vitality and joy in movement than the vast majority of our own dancers.

When a French artist has so much personality that she swamps the other dancers (all of whom are trying to do the same thing), it is easier to praise the discipline of our famous *corps de ballet* than to remember that it has been achieved at the cost of much individual expressiveness.

When an American greets his audience with a wide friendly grin, it is easier to be smug about it than to remember that many of our dancers lack spontaneity and charm.

RARELY

It is true that our dancers rarely show the ugly lapses of taste which we often rightly deplore in foreign artists. Stunts, tricks, empty virtuosity; the vulgar exploitation of so-called "personality"—all these are not found in our companies. The English style is one of harmony, balance and proportion; of nicely controlled emotion, refined elegance of movement and deep musical feeling.

In the hands of lesser dancers it betrays itself by a lack of authority and attack, an excessive modesty and reticence. The English sense of team-spirit and fear of making themselves ridiculous or ostentatious—the Public School mentality which has done so much damage to artistic expression in this country—seems to be encouraged by Ninette de Valois within the somewhat rigid framework of her company. Many dancers thus lack personality and substitute for sex-appeal a kind of watery charm.

It is doubtful whether English dancers will ever be able to escape from their background: it is part of

their inheritance both in national temperament and dance tradition. Magnificent as many of our dancers are, we cannot feel complacent or consider that we have little to learn from others.

Further, we are at a disadvantage in that with no deep-rooted national or folk dance tradition upon which to draw (for all their good intentions the contemporary Morris dancers really look rather foolish) ballet is considered by the general public as a dilettante and rather effeminate art. If a young man confesses that he is a ballet dancer there is a faint rustle of disapproval; while for girls it is considered a charming and healthy occupation, rather like riding

nearly empty every evening.

INTEGRITY

The de Cuevas Ballet has many faults, but among its assets are some of Europe's greatest dancers, ballets by no means negligible and genuine artistic integrity. Again it is the same story: an empty theatre, containing a few apathetic *balletomanes* and a sprinkling of those who by their reactions had obviously never seen ballet before.

At home the story is the same. Madame Rambert's company carries one of the most magnificent repertoires in the world: it presents works like *Lilac*

LONDON, THE WORLD'S DANCE CAPITAL? "NO" SAYS RICHARD AUSTIN IN THIS ATTACKING ARTICLE ON LONDON'S COMPLACENT ANAEMIA

horses or playing lacrosse, but hardly as a means of artistic expression.

Dance studios are crammed with girls watched by fond parents who would not for a moment consider ballet as a serious art form.

Unlike France where the leading intellectuals take an interest and often an active share in the creation of new ballets, in this country it is still regarded by many of them as a pleasant form of light entertainment—an exotic version of musical comedy—and, as yet, neither Mr. Eliot nor Mr. Graham Greene appear to have shown great anxiety to present Dame Ninette with a scenario.

Perhaps they would not be encouraged if they did!

PAROCHIAL

Thus cut off both from a large section of the general public and the intellectuals our ballet is becoming narrow and parochial, with its parish pump gushing in Floral Street. The inhabitants of that parish are very satisfied, but one cannot help feeling that this complacency is dangerous.

Chauvinism is a danger to any art, and none more than to the art of ballet which speaks an international language. It is a sorry thing that London, which has the proud reputation of being the capital of the dance world, is showing an increasing apathy towards dancers from abroad.

The Janine Charrat Company gave us an example of brilliant male dancing, a highly individual style of choreography and several works of profound musical understanding and visual beauty. What happened? The theatre was

Garden and Dark Elegies which are among the few masterpieces of our time—yet it is always possible to get a seat, even for her incomparable production of *Giselle* which is an object lesson to all present and future producers of this most beautiful of all ballets. One would imagine the theatre crammed at every performance of this *Giselle*; but that is not so.

TEMERITY

Small groups like the Walter Gore Ballet and the Metropolitan Ballet, which had the temerity to go beyond mechanical reproductions of the "classics" and to encourage new talent both among dancers and choreographers, failed through lack of support. The Ballet-Comique never even reached London—and if it had it is doubtful whether even an exquisite artist like Irene Skorik would have been able to fill the house.

Apart from Covent Garden only the Festival Hall is crammed; and that to witness a tawdry and uninspired work like *Esmeralda*, solely, one imagines, on the strength of its vague connection with an old classical ballet with plenty-of-dancing-and-no-nonsense-about-art.

For that reason it is practically impossible to get a seat at Covent Garden for *Coppelia*. The queues for each new booking period stretch the length of the Opera House; yet when the Paris Opera Ballet, never before seen in London and headed by Yvette Chauvire, opens its booking one was able to get a ticket for any performance without queueing at all.

Surely the vast audiences that go to watch Fonteyn have heard of Chauvire; surely they might be interested to see a large group of ballets by Serge Lifar—one of the outstanding figures in Western Ballet for quarter of a century; surely they remember Nina Vyrobova, and would be delighted to see so accomplished an artist properly presented on a great and famous stage.

HIBERNATION

But no: the "regulars" had apparently gone into hibernation. With their dreary little effusions about "Margot" and "Beryl", their gossip, their obsession with technicalities which they do not understand, their autograph books and impertinent familiarity towards artists whom they have never met—they were in no hurry to buy seats.

We are justly proud of our National Ballet. Fonteyn is a great ballerina, we all know it; Beriosova may become a great ballerina, we all hope so; but there are other dancers and other companies in the world from whom there is much to learn. It is time to realise our own limitations.

EXAMPLE

Here, unfortunately some English dancers have themselves set a bad example.

One hears them—mostly unimportant soloists—at the bar, discussing the performances of other companies and foreign dancers with a gentle condescension, or else with malice. The idea that "X" could learn anything from Babiloe is to him quite absurd. (One remembers "X" limping around the stage like a wounded rabbit). The idea that Colette Marchand is anything more than a cabaret artiste with pretty legs and too much sex-appeal has never crossed "Y's" mind. (One remembers her also, dull, flat-chested, paddling woefully through *Les Sylphides*).

There is no need for the ardent *balletomane* to chase the world (even if he could afford it) in search of new ballets and dancers; he has only to wait patiently in London and watch the world go by. . . . That is how I began this article, in which I have tried to show both the strength and weakness of our National Ballet and how these have been conditioned by our temperament and dance tradition; and, at the end, suggested how a few dancers and many of the "regulars" at Covent Garden have in their complacency and insularity made it absurd to talk about London as the capital of the dance world.

OPINIONS were at variance with each other as to the success or failure of the Sadlers Wells Company in Paris; seemingly impossible rumours reached us that Fonteyn had not been a success, that the opening night was a fiasco, that the criticisms in the newspapers the following morning had been damning in the extreme; we also heard other rumours which proclaimed that Fonteyn's success was tremendous, that Paris fell in love with Elvin, and the whole season was the success that one might have expected.

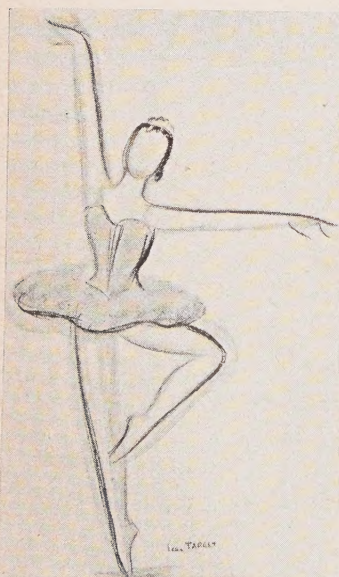
Studying the season impartially and in retrospect, we decided to analyse the opinions of the leading French critics and the Parisian public, to discover what really did happen, discarding all the reports and babbling of the gossip-mongers, leaving them to bicker amongst themselves. Taking each ballet individually, we have discussed its reception, the comments aroused, and the general impression that was made by the company.

HOMAGE

Homage to the Queen was practically universally slated by the press, they stated that it was really too much to expect for them to enthuse over it, due to the patriotic nature of the material which was so very British; a seemingly understandable criticism; surely it was not difficult to foresee the reception that this ballet would receive, for what is greeted with open arms in America, is not always greeted quite so effusively in France!

Daphnis and Chloe set the rocket of controversy soaring to the moon; Claude Baigneres in *Le Figaro* had nothing but praise for Margot Fonteyn, but that was where the plaudits ended,

Violetta Elvin



WHAT DID HAPPEN IN PARIS? THE PRESS OPINIONS SURVEYED

he damned the choreography of Ashton, comparing the steps of the shepherds to "Swedish gymnastic exercises"; he described the decor, in particular the temple, as resembling an ultra modern block of flats designed by Le Corbusier. E. Vuillermoz in the *Paris Presse*, wrote that did one really expect the fellow countrymen of Maurice Ravel to arouse any enthusiasm for this ballet "en défigurant le scénario, l'atmosphère et la chorégraphie"? He described the costumes of the shepherds as tennis shirts with engineers' trousers. Guy Dornand in *Liberation* described this ballet as the only one of the repertoire which was disappointing.

On the other hand *Mamselle Angot* received a most enthusiastic press and general reception; they liked the designs, the choreography, the dancing, and both Nadia Nerina and Alexander Grant. *Le Figaro* wrote that it was regrettable that all the other ballets in the repertoire were not as gay and full of joie de vivre; Georges Leon in *Humanité* praised every aspect of this ballet.

PATINEURS

Strangely enough *Les Patineurs* was not a success, although both Rowena Jackson and Michael Boulton were favourably received; *Paris Presse* and *L'Information* were not so kind though; all critics were unanimous in the condemnation of the costumes for this ballet.

Jacques Bourgeois in *Arts* captioned his article "Une des grandes révélations depuis *Icare*," he was of course referring to *Tiresias*; a ballet on which opinions were again strongly divided; he had nothing but praise for the decor and designs of Isabel Lambert, and for the performances of Violetta Elvin and Michael Somes.

Both Margot Fonteyn and Violetta Elvin achieved personal triumphs in *Le Lac des Cygnes*, which was not brought into the repertoire until the second week. Olivier Merlin in *Le Monde* wrote of Elvin that she showed a ravishing technique throughout, and in the second act took five curtain calls—an event that is extremely rare at the Opera; he was not so kind to John Field, for he described the role of Siegfried as a pantomime of

facial expressions, and wrote that he opened his mouth all the time "comme si le prince mastiquait de chewing gum" a sentence that does not need translation. Guy Dornand in *Liberation* wrote of Margot Fonteyn, that in the dual role of Odette-Odile, she was

Margot Fonteyn



perfection indeed.

I have purposely left all mention of the *Sleeping Beauty* till last, for it was this ballet which started the furore. The press were all at variance with one another. J. Bouret in *Franc-Tireur* captioned his criticism with "Le Sadlers Wells Ballet repose tout entier sur Margot Fonteyn."

He continued that he found the ballet disappointing, the decor cumbersome in the extreme, horribly conventional and hideously lacking in colour; also far too long, but he did praise Margot Fonteyn.

RECEPTIVE

Humanité wrote that although Parisians did not normally support ballets which span the evening, he saw no signs of tiredness in the audience, in fact it was the reverse, the audience were more receptive at the end than at the beginning.

Of Fonteyn he wrote that "she enters so much into the spirit of the music, that one forgets to

breathe whilst following her; he ended that he was still not convinced of the necessity of presenting this ballet in its entirety.

From this selection of criticisms there are little or none that can be described as biased sensationalism, but only well meant and constructive.

Finally let us end by saying that we hope it will not be too long before these two great European companies will exchange visits again; perhaps one day it will be possible to bypass the world of politics and interchange companies with those in Soviet Russia.

V.C.

—and decor

I hope the Sadler's Wells Organization will take note of the almost unanimous condemnation of the *decors* of *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Homage to the Queen* (writes Richard Austin). For many years now *decor* has lagged far behind dancing and choreography in this country; and has been entrusted, not to painters with an original and controversial idea to express, but to professional stage designers whose work is rarely more than competent.

Mr. Oliver Messel's settings for *The Sleeping Beauty* are certainly anaemic: pale, watery and flimsy, fussily over-decorated and unimaginative. His costume for the Blue Bird must be the dreariest on record: the male dancer, with his blue bathing-cap and frilly costume which makes him look like an Edwardian lady going in for a bathe, has always been a particular horror of mine, recalling as it does old photographs of Nijinski in his *Spectre de la Rose* costume.

TROUT

Unfortunately the costumes for the men in the *Queen of the Water* section of *Homage to the Queen* are still on view—each dancer nattily got up, it seems, to resemble a landed trout. I suppose that is appropriate, but surely water has more poetic associations! Complex movement, as in Mr. Ashton's beautiful ballet, does not want to be hampered by fussy elaboration which breaks the dancers' line and distracts the eye continually. Of Mr. Messel's two *decors* I am in full agreement with the French critics.

I think there is less justification for the criticism that Mr. Hurry's sets for *Swan Lake* were too traditional. I do not believe one can jazz up the classics, even if one is a genius like Carzou whose sets for the Paris Opera *Giselle* are exquisitely inappropriate.

The two sketches are by Jean Target

Celtic Ballet in America

FRESH from their performances at the Jacobs Pillow Dance Festival, Lee, Massachusetts and from the resulting plaudits of American ballet critics, Margaret Morris and members of her Celtic Ballet held a press conference in Glasgow recently.

With a gaiety and freshness which showed no sign of the five weeks of gruelling hard work which their tour must have involved, Miss Morris told of the Company's experiences, and of how their performances were received.

Three of those five weeks were spent at Jacobs Pillow, seat of the Festival which is held annually under the direction of Ted Shawn. The rather small theatre there has a capacity of 800, and was filled for all of the eighteen performances which the Company gave. The remaining fortnight was spent in touring in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont.

PRAISE

Miss Morris had a special word of praise for the theatres in which the Company played—in particular for the ample space provided for dancing in the structure of the stages. The rear of the stage of the theatre at Jacobs Pillow can be opened up to show a natural background of trees, and it was against such a (floodlit) setting that the ballet *Road to the Isles* was presented. Commenting on this presentation, Richard V. Happel, in the *Berkshire Evening Eagle*, calls it the "most impressive of their works . . . displaying the deep mysticism of the Scottish character".

In addition to the stage performances, the Celtic Ballet conducted classes during the period of the Festival. Miss Morris herself gave instruction in Margaret Morris Movement, while Mr. Bruce McClure taught Highland and other Scottish dances. Among noted international dance figures also teaching at Jacobs Pillow were Pearl Lang and Ram Gopal.

The Company's work was varied—there were dance-representations of Negro spirituals done to the records of Paul Robeson, dances arranged to the music of Bach, a new duet to a Gaelic song, entitled *The Woman's Plaid* (which was very popular), but, as one would expect, and as Miss Morris confirmed, it was the "Scottish" quality of the Ballet's work that went over in a big way with the American audiences and critics.

There were many Scots in the audiences at Jacobs Pillow—all the Scots societies had been

notified of the event, and Scots were coming from all points of the compass, some from Canada—but the Company's reception was in no way diminished in the touring points where this did not apply. It looks as though the majority of knowledgeable dance-lovers in America agree with the estimation of the distinguished Ted Shawn himself, when he mentioned Scotland as "one of the four countries in the world which produce the best dancers".

FUTURE

Questioned as to the Celtic Ballet's future activities, Miss Morris said that they hoped to arrange a further American tour next year. Also, negotiations had been begun with an agent in connection with a possible Spring tour on the continent. There would be no Theatre Royal season this year, although there would be an opportunity to see the Company at St. Andrew's Halls, Glasgow, on October 28th.

As a very broad perspective, Miss Morris said that she would like to see the Celtic Ballet with two first-rate companies, one touring steadily in Scotland, and the other abroad. There was a justifiable note of challenge in her voice when she said that supporters of the Celtic Ballet should "persuade the Arts Council that people in Scotland want to see us".

With the enlarging of her School's activities made possible by the recent outright purchase of the premises which they have occupied for some years, and with the international reputation behind them which this American tour has created, the Celtic Ballet could be a centre of development in Scotland for a new, virile growth of activity in the literary, theatre and plastic arts and in music.

OUR OWN

Much of the Scottish taxpayer's hard-earned money is going to the support of a Company which we are rarely privileged to see north of the Border; without in any way attacking the worthiness of Sadler's Wells as an item of public expenditure, it should be possible for us to argue that our own Scottish ballet company, a living expression of its country's culture, is entitled to support from our own public money.

The reaction of the American critics to its work has strengthened that case, and it is to be hoped that their reviews will be read and the appropriate moral drawn in official circles.

D. K. CAMERON



AN ASIATIC MARTHA GRAHAM

THE Japanese "Ballet" of Miho Hanayagui which opened on November 4 at the Princes Theatre, reflects—as could be expected—the traditional patience, thoughtfulness, slow approach and archaic posturing of Japanese dancing and theatrical art in general.

The company is technically excellent for the work they are called upon to stage, quite beautifully costumed, accompanied excellently . . . and probably the most boring spectacle of the London ballet year.

Impatience grows into physical restlessness while one waits for some choreogra-

phic action. None comes. A tradition-devoted art, Japanese dance has—apparently—been totally unaffected by the growth of dancing as a motivated theatrical art.

FROM PROPS

The colour and novelty of the performance comes solely from the props, almost more of these are used in each dance than even Walter Gore conceived possible.

If it has a similarity to anything in the west, this dancing seems to stem from some primeval Isadora Duncan, of whom, I suppose, Miho Hanayagui is the equivalent apostle to Martha Graham.

To me the evening was saved by the beautiful *Koto*, a rhapsody for an elongated, lie-flat string bass, played by Kohei Amada. We could profitably hear more contemporary Japanese music if M. Amada's piece is an accurate indication.

One of the traditional dances portrayed by Miho Hanayagui and her company



Your January **BALLET TODAY** will be on sale on December 20th. Ask for it then—better still, tell your newsagent to keep your copy now and so be sure



ANTO

the "Ted"

● whirling
were his ba
through the
as if they
reedless cla



Portrait by June Ryan

ANY MAN who leads a ballet company may fondly imagine himself as the Messiah of 1910 named Serge Diaghilev. Or, at least, they may fumble their dreams by thinking of 'Big Serge' in visual terms based on Anton Walbrook's portrayal in *The Red Shoes*.

To ape Diaghilev a man must first decide which facet of the Russian's voluminous, volte-face personality he is to carbon copy. Diaghilev was a dilettante, a patron, a novelty-seeker, a vicious taskmaster. He was also the man who, in giving Russian ballet to the West, all but gave the renaissance art of dancing to the world.

He opened the way for Chaliapin, for Stravinsky, for Prokofiev, for Bakst and Benois, helped Picasso . . . a hundred more. He introduced Pavlova, Karsavina, Nijinski, Fokine, Kchessinska, Sokolova, Massine, Balanchine, Idzikowski, Alicia Markova . . . and Anton Dolin.

SUCCESSFULLY

DOLIN has successfully followed Diaghilev in this way: he has kept a large ballet company together without a state subsidy. Ballet without

bailiffs would be an unimaginable thing in our age, Dolin has dealt with them. He has kept the framework around a dozen important, or important-to-be, dancers, and keeps a score or so ballets in his permanent repertoire.

His tactics are often bad, his judgment faulty, his taste a compromised vacuum, his results no excuse for the means involved.

And yet: one could forgive Ted Lewis his impossible music because his was the work which kept such artists as Spanier and Brunies fed and clothed. One can, in much the same way, excuse Dolin. Often the excuse is not needed. He has also allowed fine work to be done. Again the similarity with Lewis: who would force his musicians into recording 'Hi Diddle Diddle' but allow them to swing into their own for a final, impromptu Jazz break at the record's end.

Ted would stand, baton in hand, listening with a puzzled frown to the Jazz sound made by these same men who, a moment before, were wafting a three-four waltz from out the library that was Ted Lewis's trademark as it is Guy Lombardo's today.

Anton Dolin must often puzzle, frown, too.

TRAGEDY

PERHAPS his tragedy is having too many cooks, and the tours they lead him on. Such misdirected ideas as a ballet version of Alice in Wonderland—a book which has never been able to repeat its literary success when torn from context. Or the lush choreographing of Lehar's Merry Widow which Ruth Page flew from America to do. Another of his long-standing mistakes is a solo to Ravel's Bolero. Even a provincial "critic" who reviewed this male solo as the Dying Swan (a Pavlova solo) has not had its effect on Dolin. He still dances the corn which neither the cave gypsies of Spain nor the crewcut arrangers of Stan Kenton have ever been able to improve.

But Dolin has improved since the day in 1916 when Seymour Hicks told him: "M'lad, you'll never be a dancer." But Dolin has been a dancer. One of the finest male dancers of our half-century, and one of the greatest partners (to Markova) of all times.

He has changed since 1916. His name, when Sir Seymour referred to him, was Patrick Healey-Kay. His only abnormality known: he wanted to dance. In the 1910's that was an aberration. In the 1950's it still is. But with more reason.

ACROBATICS

HE WAS the only British male dancer to star for Diaghilev. Diaghilev's childish chase for novelties may well have had its effect on him.

Diaghilev used Dolin's acrobatics in *The Blue Train*. In *Les Facheux* he appeared en pointe—in the blocked shoes worn only by ballerinas. The body that was Serge Diaghilev is now dust under the cypresses of a Venetian graveyard. The unquenched quirk-appetite has been carried on. The legacy of Diaghilev is schizophrenic. In general: ballet as we know it. In particular persons: a shuttle-service mentality which stamps them as visibly as the board-back gait of an actor stamps him a product of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

Chanel, by the way, designed the bathing costumes for *The Blue Train*. They were bad enough to send her into the perfume business. But Dolin had his triumph. That Diaghilev's interest in Dolin soon waned is, perhaps, the reason for Dolin's greater success than that achieved by any other Diaghilev favourite.

Since those golden days Dolin has worked at many variety theatres as he has opera houses. He has been a guest in a score of widely-different companies from Sadler's Wells to America's Ballet Theatre. It was the owner of London's "we never closed" Windmill Theatre who backed his first company. And lost heavily in the doing.

RETURN

THE company closed in time for both Dolin and Markova to get to the United States, whence they returned in 1948. Over 25,000 people saw their first return performance—at the mammoth Empress Hall. Perhaps it was then and there that Solomons found the germ of his idea to provide arena theatre which is planned for next year.

With almost no money Dolin formed a small company—and a creditable one. Keeping to my libeller's idea of myself as a wicked type, I missed press nights and journeyed to the Scottish jute capital, Dundee, to see their performances there at Caird Hall. They were working as hard as if the audience had been a West-end one. Damn Dolin as you like—and I have often liked—he works as if he had a career to carve out instead of having had a wonderful one behind him.

In 1950 the company appeared in London and with it, two masterpieces. Prince Igor to Borodin's effectual, effective music. And the great Petrouchka. It also produced one of the saddest proofs of ballet as an immature, effeminate spectacle *Pas de Quatre*. This, a cod romp for four copy-ballerinas, might be equalled if one day La Scala, Milan invites Mario Lanza to appear as Caruso with a programme note giving all Scotti's jokes and Spyros Skouras in the foyer smiling as he gives away papier mache models of the CinemaScope screen.

CONQUER

AS Festival Ballet—tied to the '51 Festival of Britain—Dolin's company set out to really conquer the world. A series of patrons and astute salesmen took over the purse-strings. Julian Braunsweig, a man who could have kept Diaghilev in check, was by now the brain behind the ballet.

A year later trouble started. Markova, overnight a sophisticated, independent woman, left Dolin. Soon, Sonia Arova, the loveliest girl in the company and the best dancer, severed her connection too. It was not such a clean break as that made by the more sensible Alicia. Sonia decided to sue. The result cannot matter to her, by this time she was in Japan earning nearly £4,000 for a few appearances.

In place of both Markova and Arova, Dolin announced a young, poodle-cut girl named Belinda Wright. But Belinda was no Lady Macbeth. She wouldn't help the dagger. And she is still far from being a Markova.

At 49, Dolin himself is far from being a Diaghilev. But much of the Diaghilev myth would not be suitable as an ideal to be achieved. Both have been weak enough to allow too many advisors to toboggan them in the wrong directions. Few individualists can make one excellent and one pathetic move within the space of a few weeks. Dolin can, but often the pathetic move must have been activated by a "friend."

CRITICS

DOLIN may count his critics his enemies. But, no unique thing, I would say his friends have been his worst enemies. Under the assured facade ("fiery sparks from his Spanish-type eyes" as one sob-sister once wrote) Dolin is a timid, often undecided man. An artist given the reins too early, and never too sure of what horse has its head between the shafts.

Many men, running successful careers, have lost their shirts by overseeing a stable of ponies. Bing Crosby, J. Arthur Rank . . . a hundred more. Dolin is no exception. His stable is Festival Ballet—an unpedigreed but strongly backed team—but he has a few too many trainers and stable-boys.

" . . . and his company" is an ideal for youngsters. For mature artists it can often be a drag, no matter how good the company itself is.

When American impresario Sol Hurok (biofilmed by 20th-Fox in "*Tonight We Sing*")—who backs his dancing fancies to the tune of several hundred thousand dollars a year—saw Festival Ballet's new work, he immediately ordered the ending changed.

Dolin needs such an impresario. One who could tell him to graze on his own, and have the whole ending changed.

DOLIN

of ballet

company as if it
and swishing
"art directing"
chords on his



THE *Ballet Today* cover study of ballerina **Beryl Grey** precedes her return to Sadler's Wells Ballet. During November this very popular dancer was a guest of the Royal Helsinki Ballet in Finland and danced a new, full-length version of *Lac des Cygnes* with this national company. I rumoured recently that the Helsinki Ballet would come to London. This has not materialized. But, if we are the losers in this, certainly Helsinki gained greatly while London had still a month to wait before welcoming a dancer whose absence has not lost her a single enthusiast.

The photograph of **Beryl Grey** is by **Mike Davis**, as was the cover of **Rosemary Lindsay** on the November issue.

THE film *Neapolitan Fantasy* (or *Carosello Napoletano*), which was previewed by **Ernest Borneman** in the November *Ballet Today*, was premiered on the first night of the Italian Film Festival at London's Tivoli cinema.

It proved to be a seemingly balletically-inspired film without precedent. The whole action, away from the strictly dance sequences, was worked to definite tempi and more choreographed than directed. The film traces a superficially historical, yet often deeply thoughtful, history of Naples. I found it slightly overlong, expectedly so, but engrossing. The colour is soft, the whole experiment successful.

OF dance interest the film is surfeited. **Antonio** and **Rosita Segovia**, the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas with **Rosella Hightower**, **George Skibine**, **Marjorie Tallchief**, **Serge Golovine**, **Jacqueline Moreau**, **Wladimir Skouratoff**, Ballet Africain de Keita Fodeba, **Yvette Chauvire** and **Joan Baron**. **Gigli's** voice is superbly recorded and **Massine** as *Punchinello* is excellent.

The purely balletic sequences include an Adam and Eve tongue-in-cheek ballet (a la Can-Can?), and a huge finale. Yet such incidents as the Moorish invasion, and the rape and suicide of the sailor's girl, are achieved balletically.

Whether Archway will manage any but a most limited distribution for *Neapolitan Fantasy* is problematical. But I think no *Ballet Today* reader would regret having taken trouble to see it.

HOW pleasant to welcome yet another volume of "Ballet" the annual photographic folio by **Serge Lido**.

This year's volume is prefaced by **Jean-Louis Barrault** and again boasts a good text by **Irene Lidova** whom I am glad to see speaks of the "disparaging critics" of **Martha Graham** in the plural. I had been led to believe that I laughed alone!

What are the best of this year's photographs? The **Antonio** in colour? The **Indian**, beautifully coloured and active? The lovely **Marjorie Tallchief**, the **Rosella Hightower** which has the appearance of an oil portrait, which? There are too many. Each year **Lido** manages to surprise, and please. And each year he sets himself an even higher standard with which he must compete only twelve months hence.

MONTAGUE CALMAN, who writes his first "A Musician Looks at Ballet" column for this magazine in this issue, should make interesting reading in the months to come. Not in the narrow rut of the typical musical critic, **Calman** has a searching, broad perspective which takes his eye far further than the score in front of him.

A shot of Violetta Elvin while in Milan with the Sadler's Wells Ballet which performed at La Scala. (Photo: Paul Popper).



Mrs. Erich Kleiber said "Your article is so much more than musical criticism; it gives an exciting atmosphere." And, obviously, such a critic fits well into *Ballet Today*.

WHEN I first took over this magazine I made it clear that the dry, defeatist peevishness of current dance writing was not what I could supply. Ballet must even before being beautiful, be engrossing, exciting. And music must, of necessity, be an important part of the aural excitement. **Mr. Calman** is a new addition to *Ballet Today's* staff of columnists and one I am very pleased to welcome.

SOL HUOK, in taking over the booking control of Lucia Chase's Ballet Theatre, has made for some very potent thinking in dance circles. Will **Hurok** star **Rabovsky** with the company—already led by **Alonso** and **Youskevitch**—or what will he do to fulfil his obvious ambition: a homegrown com-

Aisle

A COMMENTARY ON

pany to make as much money as an imported one.

California's domestic champagne has never wiped Cham-pagne's produce off the American dinner table. I wonder if **Hurok** can call yet another company "fabulous". Certainly, in Ballet Theatre, he has a very great fund of mature talent. The effect on the impoverished New York City Ballet? It could be disastrous—and yet **Balanchine** seems to achieve his best work when faced by bitter opposition. I hope **Balanchine** repeats his past pattern—and succeeds. Co-existence is not impossible.

But which English company will go to the United States under the **Hurok** banner next year? Will any?

TWO **Valerie Bettis** ballets have been added to Ballet Theatre's repertoire, incidentally. *Cradle and All* is the first, to a score by **Kenyon Hopkins**. The second is *A Streetcar Named Desire*, from the Tennessee Williams play, to **Alex North's** music. *Streetcar* was performed by the **Danilova-Franklin** group previously.

ON **Sir Gerald Kelly's** resignation last month, the BBC rebroadcast an interview with the Royal Academy president in which he spoke of a ballet performance as the most memorable event of his life. The performance was the first Paris evening of the **Diaghilev Ballet**.

With **Arnold Bennet**, **Kelly** was kept waiting for three-quarters of an hour along with a thousand angry Parisians who were outraged at savage Russians keeping a Paris audience waiting. The first interval, an hour long, outraged them the more. **Sir Gerald** remembered best **Pavilion d'Armide** with **Nijinski**, and with **Benois'** decorations.

"You people who are accustomed to beautiful dancing" he ended "can't know how impres-

seat

sive was this most beautiful ballet seen in five hundred years."

THE portraits especially drawn for *Ballet Today* by **June Ryan** have become a very popular feature of this magazine. I now hear from the Royal Exchange art exhibition that **Miss Ryan** entered six portraits for their annual show—and all six were hung! One of these was the sketch of **Mary Munro** which appeared in *Ballet Today* recently.

In this issue **Anton Dolin** is featured and the new year will see the first of a further six portraits completed for us by the artist.

DURING November the Oxford University Ballet Club presented a programme of Ballet—their first since 1942 when **Walter Gore's** *Bartlemas Dances and Confessional* were premiered. New ballets by **Ronald Wilson** to **Michael Hobson** music (*Hagoromo*) and by **Kathleen Adams** to **Nielson** music (*Serenata Invano*). **Peter Darrell's** *Celeste and Celestina*, previously done for the City Ballet, was also presented by a group of dancers headed by **Jennie Trevelyan**, **Alexis Goher**, and pupils of the de Voss and Bush-Davies schools. I cannot comment on the evening, Oxford to me is what Asia Minor was to **James Agate**. But I see no reason why other universities cannot follow Oxford's excellent lead and stage such shows.

BY error, I referred last month to the "Royal Academy" in Sydenham. This should have read "the Royce Academy" of course.

I WAS very impressed by the recreation of the Edinburgh Festival **Diaghilev** Exhibition in London at Forbes House. **Richard Buckle** and his associates—whose names fill pages of the sumptuously produced catalogue

—have a very real success as the reward for their months of work.



The Glass Slipper—A 1955 Cinderella story—gets underway at MGM with Roland Petit directing the ballet sequences. This rehearsal shot shows Leslie Caron, George Reich and Roland Petit during pre-production work.

Somehow, even to the warmly exotic **Guerlain** perfume, **Diaghilev** has been given houseroom here and his overjewelled personality well-framed. The feeling of his own special world, in that world which is itself foreign to us today, seems very real as one wanders slowly through the overflowing galleries of *Forbes House*.

If at all possible I feel that this Exhibition should be preserved, if on a smaller scale, as a permanent ballet showplace. Perhaps it is more evocative than it is historically perfect. But, then, ballet is an evocative beauty.

I HAVE not yet read through the transcript of **John Gregory's** lecture "Diaghilev's Oversight: and the aftermath" published by the Federation of Russian Classical Ballet. But

any writing which gets away from the father fixation which seems

to envelope this ballet year is welcome. The cover design, after **Cocteau**, by **Sheila Walters** is excellent.

Mr. Gregory blames insecurity for ballet's withering. I should have thought security was the real danger. And, if this is a period of recoil and decline, God knows what the next ten years will be. I disagree that the time is not auspicious for a "new Diaghilev". The trouble is that the current ballet hierarchy would no more accept a new **Diaghilev** than the Imperial accepted the original model.

But we do agree on one fact: that the challenge to ballet today (and to *Ballet Today*) is to beat the materialists.

RICHARD ARNELL'S *Punch And The Child* ballet is to be serialized over BBC-TV in the Children's Hour programme on November 29, December 6 and 13.

Although the ballet has not been given a stage premier in this country it has, I am told, been staged theatrically in the United States. The music is, however, known here. Of it, the composer says "It is apt that the ballet—a child's fantasy—should have its visual premiere in children's T.V. And there is something hugely satisfying in having a juvenile audience. As an audience, children are more important than adults. They should never have to take a back seat where music is concerned."

There will be a front T.V. seat at home for **Arnell's** daughters—**Jennifer**, six, and **Claudine**, ten—both ballet students. And on December 1 they will see a revival of another of their father's popular ballets, *Harlequin in April*, at Sadlers Wells Theatre.

Kenneth McMillan, who danced the title role in **Arnell's** "Sherlock Holmes" ballet *The Great Detective*, is choreographer of the children's T.V. production of *Punch and the Child*.

Gamba

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SWAN LAKE played by the Philharmonia under Irving, HMV CLP 1018, is most welcome. He gives a good balletic interpretation, carrying us to the very stage of Covent Garden and includes so many main items that this disc becomes a rival to those of Fistoulari and the LSO Decca LXT 2681-2. Fistoulari's tempi do not always conform to the tempi to which one is accustomed, but they nevertheless unfold this enchanted tale in a manner delighting both ear and imagination. Since the standard of both recordings is high, it is a matter of personal choice and finance. Do you want to recall the more general effect by passing from one musical peak to another—if so, HMV. Or is it to follow Odette and Siegfried in their romantic story—well then, Decca.

Karajan's conducting of Beethoven's *First Symphony*, Columbia 33 CX 1136, is noble and exhilarating but it was a problem thwarted with difficulties for Janine Charrat and her abstract ballet, *Symphony*. John Taras similarly put his head into the lion's mouth with his ballet, *La Gloire* using the *Egmont Overture* and the *Lenora No. 3*, which, on the reverse side, receive the same fine treatment from this conductor, whose artistic stature is so rapidly increasing. Another symphony used for ballet is Bizet's, which has become popular with choreographers, Lichine's *Impressions*, Balanchine's *Palais de Crystal* (*Symphony in C*) and Andree Howard's *Assembly Ball*—what an air of mystery and gracious dignity Svetlana Beriosova gave it. Columbia's recording, 33 CX 1173, is good apart from some blurring occasionally in the woodwind.

How often have producers sought more effective music than Mendelssohn's for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and with what little success! Just listen to Kletzki conducting on Columbia 33 CX 1174—he obviously believes in fairies. How delicately he persuades the Philharmonia, the soloists, and BBC Chorus to his belief. Oberon has certainly cast his spell. A very different spell, a modern one, is Poulenc's gentle satirical touch for Nijinska's *Les Biches* of the 1920's. The score however, though firmly linked to that period, abounds with enjoyment whether you knew those days or not. Fistoulari and the L.S.O. carry it off well on Parlophone PMC 1004.

Two rather disappointing discs were *The Heart of the Ballet*, HMV ALP 1133, and a Liszt

Recital by Brailowsky, HMV ALP 1110. The former covers excerpts from *Giselle*, *Spectre*, *Sylphides*, *Sylvia*, *Swanlake* and *The Nutcracker* so that it is an inexpensive way of recalling several ballets but Stokowski's conducting and highly individual tempi I found unattractive. The recital covers some of the music for such ballets as *Vision of Margarite* and *Apparitions* but this great pianist seems to have lost the unique sensitivity he possessed for Liszt. However the violinist, Rucci, puts over Sarasate's *Danzas Espanolas* very well, Decca LXT 2930. They are the popular type and more obvious than Albeniz' *Iberia Suite*, Parlophone PMC 1006, parts of which Pilar Lopez choreographed. Poulet's impressive conducting makes this an attractive disc and interesting to compare with the original and complete piano suite so ably performed by Querol on London DTL 93022-3.

For the humorous side of life, here is *Facade*, Decca LXT 2977, and *Carnival of the Animals*, Capitol CTL 7069, with Ibert's witty *Divertissement*—Ruth Page's *Impromptu au Bois*. Undoubtedly amusing and the performers really enter into the fun. *Facade* is in its original form, "An Entertainment", with Dame Edith Sitwell and Peter Pears declaiming the nonsensical verse—most entertaining when taken in small doses.

Alborada del Gracioso never fails to remind me of Alberto Lorca's dancing with the Pilar Lopez Ballet. Lipatti's rendering on Columbia SEB 3501 is good but the piano tone does not altogether help, whereas the recording of Columbia SEB 3504, Beecham's captivating conducting of *Festivo* by Sibelius, is excellent—it is part of Gore's *Antonia*. Though well recorded, I would have been happier with more elegance from Keilberth's conducting of Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, Telefunken LGX 66025—Gsovsky's ballet, *Nocturne*, first performed by Les Ballets des Champs Elysees.

In Massine's *Bogatyri*, we step into that fascinating world of colour and fantasy, Asiatic Russia, so richly conjured up by Gontcharova and Borodin's *Second Symphony*. This is particularly true in the case of the Philharmonia which gives a superb performance on Columbia 33CX1167—Kletzki's virility and tenderness bring out the contrasting moods.

The latest Decca Catalogue, including Capitol, Brunswick, Telefunken and London, covering 33½ rpm records up to the beginning of the year, and those for H.M.V., Columbia and Parlophone, containing all speeds, up to June, have recently been received. They also include much musical information.

B.C.

The Legacy of Laban — Now

RUDOLF VON LABAN celebrates his 75th birthday this month. That may mean very little to readers in this country, but to American readers and Central Europeans, his name immediately springs to mind as the man responsible for devising a method—a pictorial script for recording all forms of movement.

Laban, a Hungarian, is a widely cultured man who, absorbing the essence of Byzantine and Asiatic cultures as well as European, became primarily concerned with the art of movement, particularly in relation to theatrical dancing.

He spent years of study in his system of recording movement patterns which would enable every step of a dance to be analysed, possibly years later, in relation to the whole dance. Under this 'script,' a dancer would be able to realise the full possibilities and significance of the steps, their formation and rhythm.

Thus, when recreating a ballet, the choreographer's original intentions could be wholly appreciated, which is of inestimable significance, especially as the roles are likely to be taken later

by different dancers to the original creators.

UNSAFE

It is generally conceded that the film, apart from being expensive, is an inaccurate method of recording the dance. The rhythms cannot be completely accurate, nor their performance. This puts the choreographer's original idea on an unsafe footing from the start. Previous systems of 'dance notation' as it is now called, had not proved adaptable to all forms of movement.

Although Laban had studied dancing extensively in Paris, it was with dancer-choreographer Kurt Jooss, founder and director of the well-known Ballets Jooss, that he produced his system for publication in 1928. The work was later translated into three

other languages. Needless to say, the Ballets Jooss have used the method extensively throughout their somewhat tempestuous career.

DELAY

The war has definitely proven that England, which gave Laban his home during the war, has fallen behind in using and exploiting his dance notation system. In New York, the Dance Notation Bureau is a flourishing organisation under Ann Hutchinson—once a student in England under Jooss.

Unhampered by the 1939-45 interlude, they have forged ahead and are the most important indication of the strength of Laban's work. The opportunities for its use are admittedly greater in America, where the musical and other forms of theatrical dancing than the ballets we know, provide a wide scope; but in addition to this, the Bureau is kept alive with a teaching system, resulting in the issuing of a Diploma to qualified Laban method teachers.

There is also a library and facilities for exchanging and developing ideas and problems.

HERE

It was interesting to read a

few months back that Ninette de Valois had arranged for the dance notation system to be studied comprehensively by Pauline Clayden and Margaret Dale.

For, apart from private demonstrations, there is to be but one public performance of dancing, specifically to honour Rudolf von Laban on the occasion of his 75th birthday, and this at Toynbee Hall.

At the time of going to press, it is understood that Kurt Jooss, amongst others, has been asked to participate in this programme, which, all being well, Mr. Laban will attend. Hettie Loman is creating a new ballet, to music by Adda Heynssen and decor by Christoforou as a gift to Laban.

FITTING

It seems sad, therefore, that circumstances should leave Laban so little appreciated in our dance studios and theatres today. Sad that modern dance, to which Laban was more strongly drawn for what he believed were its freer, more comprehensive movements, is at such a low ebb.

Can this one programme pay him due homage, providing an audience with tangible evidence of his most plausible legacy to dancing?

Susan Lester

Will Provincial Ballet Work?

TWO groups have planned to work out active provincial ballet companies since the launching of *BALLET TODAY's* first articles on this subject last year. I have invited Frances Crossley, artistic director of the forming West-Country Ballet, to answer the basic question on decentralised ballet: will it work? Here she answers, of course, in the affirmative—and gives her reasons why, and her ideas on "how."

Provincial ballet will work because...

...of the enormous audience potential scattered throughout the country in towns too small to provide financial security or adequate facilities for the large touring companies.

...the over-centralisation of the major companies tends to make them produce works which are intelligible to the intellect rather than the emotion. Art cannot reach or influence a wide public if an emotional appeal is lacking.

...we believe that, away from the struggle to follow each new Metropolitan cult, a provincial company could concentrate on the creation of this vital, and often missing emotional link between the ballet and its audience.

...we do not believe the London companies alone can fully utilise the artistic capabilities of the whole Country. In many parts of the British Isles there are great sources of inspiration which have been in the past and still are being, constantly ignored.

...we believe that audiences everywhere will appreciate what is good if it is presented intelligently and without affectation.

...we do not recognise "provincial" as a standard of criticism. Some of the most enterprising work in the theatre is being done by provincial repertory companies.

...we know, given a chance, that we could make it work.

AND HOW? By...

...making sure that original and worthwhile ideas exist before the Company does and not the reverse as is frequently the case.

...emphasising quality rather than quantity. Unfortunately in the past "small" and "tatty" have too often been synonymous.

...writing dance and drama in the greater part of the repertoire and rejecting the ultra-sophisticated and experimental.

...giving opportunities to artists and musicians whose artistic roots are in those parts of the country from which the Company operates. Thus ensuring that in the repertoire will be reflected the history, traditions and daily life of the people.

...each company turning its back resolutely on inferior recreations of the "Classics" and by developing an individual artistic policy.

...the intelligent use of publicity especially through ballet clubs, schools and other educational organisations.

...NEVER copying the productions of other companies in the spirit of "anything you can do, I can do worse."

and Laban, by himself

P RINCIPLE of Dance and Movement Notation. By Rudolf Laban. (Macdonald & Evans, 10s.)

In August a book on Labanotation by Ann Hutchinson was reviewed in this magazine; now Rudolf Laban, the inventor of this system, explains and elaborates his theories and principles, and with many illustrations and eleven folding diagrams.

Various attempts have been made to set down the sequences of steps in graphical signs, but the results have been relatively unfruitful, and the loss to ballet is immeasurable. Without an adequate system of musical notation, Mozart and Beethoven would now be only silent names; and because of this lack of a dance notation, nearly all the great ballets of the past are lost to us, while most modern creations must depend on the frailty of human memory.

Laban claims he has evolved a system based on the combination of motor elements used for ballet and other forms of dancing, as well as dramatic and practical movements, which fully records all movements of the human body.

Its use is spreading in Europe and America, and choreographers such as Balanchine and Robbins employ it for the notation of all their major works; while it will soon be part of the Sadler's Wells School curriculum. In time every student of the dance will take Notation as a normal subject.

To the uninitiated, the geometry of Laban's symbols may seem incomprehensible, and rather discouraging, but dancers who have studied the system assure me that, with application, it can be grasped and mastered by anyone of normal intelligence.

P. C.

diary

Sadlers Wells Theatre Ballet at S.W. Theatre

- Nov. 25 : *Sylphides, Blood Wedding, Pineapple Poll*
 27 : (mat) *Carnaval, Poll, Cafe*
 Dec. 1 : *Lady and the Fool, Harlequin in April, Cafe*
 4 : (mat) *Sylphides, Harlequin, Carte Blanche*
 7 : *Carnaval, Blood Wedding, Lady and the fool*
 10 : *Sylphides, Harlequin Cafe*
 11 : (mat) *Cafe, Carte Blanche, Poll*
 15 : *Carnaval, Blood Wedding, Carte Blanche*
 22 : *Selina (revival; 1st perf.), Harlequin in April, Poll.*

Markova and Dolin

- Dec. 27 : *Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin will star in this year's "Where The Rainbow Ends" at Festival-hall. Harald Lander has choreographed a new ballet insert for Markova.*

London Ballet Circle

- December 19 : At 3 p.m. in the Sallex Erard, 18 Gt. Marlborough-street, W.1. Alicia Markova will talk about her career and answer the audience's questions.

Laban Tribute

- Dec. 6 : At Toynbee-hall, a special programme to celebrate the 75th birthday of Rudolf Laban.

Sadlers Well's Ballet at Covent Garden

- Dec. 16 : *Ma'mzelle Angot, Ballet Imperial, Firebird*
 18 : *do.*
 23 : *Les Sylphides, Homage, Boutique Fantastique.*
 27 (afternoon and evening)
 27 (afternoon and evening) : *Coppelia*
 29 : *Lac des Cygnes (Fonteyn/Somes)*

Who's Who in Ballet Today: 9

T

Maria Tallchief. American dancer, who first worked with the 1942 Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, before joining Ballet Society in 1947 and then New York City Ballet as ballerina. Currently she is ballerina of the new Serge Denham Ballet Russe touring the United States.

Marjorie Tallchief. American dancer who joined Ballet Theatre (1944), Original Ballet Russe (1946), Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo (1947) and merged with this into the current de Cuevas ballet. She is married to George Skibine.

Tamara Toumanova. Russian dancer and one of the outstanding pupils of Olga Preobrajenska. First worked with the Monte Carlo Ballet and later with a succession of companies before starring in New York in a musical and becoming a regular guest in Hollywood musicals. Makes frequent guest appearances, most recently with Festival Ballet in London this summer. She is now in the U.S. with this company.

U

Galina Ulanova. Soviet dancer born 1912. A pupil of Vaganova, Ulanova graduated at sixteen in Leningrad and rose rapidly to her present position as prima ballerina assoluta. She is often spoken of as the greatest ballerina of our time.

V

Christiane Vaussard. French dancer born 1923. A product of the Paris Opera School, Vaussard joined the Opera in 1936, danced in London before the war, and rose to danseuse étoile. Today she is senior danseuse étoile.

Violette Verdy. French dancer, studied under Victor Gsovsky and joined the Champs-Elysses Ballet when she was twelve. She joined the Roland Petit Ballets de Paris and danced with Petit during both of his 1953 London seasons. Currently she is with Festival Ballet for the United States tour.

Nina Vyroubova. Russian/French dancer trained by Preobrajenska and today a danseuse étoile with the Paris Opera Ballet.

W

Belinda Wright. English dancer born 1929. She joined Ballet Rambert in 1945, later danced with Roland Petit and joined Festival Ballet. She is now with the Marquis de Cuevas Ballet.

Y

Igor Youskevitch. Russian dancer born 1912, studied in Paris under Preobrajenska before joining various small companies and, eventually, the de Basil Ballet. Since 1946 has been premier danseur of the American Theatre Ballet.

Z

Vera Zorina. German dancer trained under Legat, Gsovsky, etc. Has danced with Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, Ballet Theatre etc. and was seen in London in *On Your Toes* which she has just revived in New York. She also appeared in New York in Honneger's *Joan of Arc at the Stake* in the role Ingrid Bergman has taken in London.

George Zorich. Russian dancer studied in Paris under Preobrajenska, Nijinska, etc. Danced with de Basil Co., Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, etc. Currently with the de Cuevas Ballet.

This concludes the series of In Ballet Today which has been running in this magazine. An enlarged version of the series, with many additional notes, a number of lengthy profiles and analyses, and illustrations, is to be published during next year.

An addendum will also be published.

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from
page three

the career of MOIRA SHEARER

★

as
*Odette/
Odile*

Legat's was evacuated, she joined the Sadler's Wells Ballet School, until it closed down after the first air-raids on London. She then received an invitation from Mona Inglesby to become a member of her newly-formed company touring the provinces, The International Ballet.

Moira was now fourteen and this was her first experience of theatrical life, and the complications of war-time travelling. It was hard work, and there were all kinds of emergencies, but it was fun. She remembers standing in the wings while hasty last minute alterations were made to a dress she was wearing; and learning two new parts between matinee and evening performance, besides having to dance her own role and appear as the Fairy of the Song Birds. When the Sadler's Wells School reopened, she returned to it, and a little later joined the company.

Soon the audience at the New Theatre, the war-time home of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, began to look for the bright burnished head among the demure dark ones in the corps de ballet; and before long she was given her first created role. This was as Pride in Ashton's ballet, *The Quest*, and her youth, assurance, and imperious beauty, made a great impression.

During those war years at the Theatre, interspersed with provincial and E.N.S.A. tours, Moira Shearer danced in a wide repertoire of roles, ranging from the Polka and Tango in *Facade* to the young Girl in *Le Spectre de la Rose*, and glittering Odile in the third act of *Lac*.

RED SHOES

It was during the first crowded year at Covent Garden that Michael Powell, looking for a star for his film, *The Red Shoes*, went to the ballet and knew that he had found her. But it took

him nearly a year to persuade Moira to accept the part.

The film was a phenomenal success, breaking many records, and running for over two years on Broadway. The credit was, for the most part, due to Moira Shearer, who became internationally famous and was besieged with film contracts. All these she refused.

She was now subjected to a glare of publicity, unlike anything experienced in ballet often embarrassing and ruthless and from which she was never to be entirely free. She said she began

to dread picking up a newspaper in case she found herself misrepresented or the centre of some controversy.

The film world was aggrieved because she had criticised method of film technique as applied to ballet, and because she refused to make another film.

The ballet purists resented the fact that she had made a film at all.

Her own explanation of why she refused went unheeded—she felt she was not ready as an actress and wished to study dramatic technique and voice production, and so would only accept an all-dancing part. With one exception all film offers had been for acting roles, such as Mary Queen of Scots, and Tess of the D'Urbervilles. The one exception she refused to consider, for it was to remake an old Pavlova film, *The Dumb Girl of Portici*.

GISELLE

She returned to ballet to make her first essay as Giselle, and in Ashton's ballet, *Don Juan*, a new warmth became apparent in her art when she created the part of the Young Wife. She also created the title role of *Cinderella* as Margot Fonteyn had injured her foot on the first night of *Don Juan* and was unable to dance again for several months. On her return from the first American tour she married Ludovic Kennedy, the writer.

She was now entering the most important phase of her career: technically accomplished and, therefore, free to develop as an artist. She filled Covent Garden with her sparkling Princess

Aurora and bird-like Swan Princess; Giselle seemed to elude her. In modern ballet—*Cinderella*, *Scenes de Ballet*, *Ballet Imperial* and *Symphonic Variations* were among her most successful roles; and these were the type of part for which she was most frequently cast, though she sighed for the opportunity to be comic, grotesque, or flamboyant, rather than ornamental. It was for this reason that she accepted Roland Petit's invitation to take the part of Carmen when Jeanmaire injured her leg at the beginning of the Paris Season. It needed courage to accept a role not naturally suited to her temperament and when its creator had made it so entirely her own, but Moira found the challenge stimulating, and won with, reservations, the approval of her French audience.

RUNNING

She now appeared to be successfully combining marriage, ballet and film careers; but when asked how she managed, in conjunction with her other activities, to run a home, she replied with a rueful smile, "Well, I run out in the mornings and run in at night!"

She made another film, *The Tales of Hoffman*—an all-dancing part, and again under Powell's direction—and accompanied the Wells on their second American tour. On her first appearance in the London season that followed, it was obvious to those backstage that she was ill. She was dancing in *The Sleeping Beauty*, and by

To Page 21

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Digest History of Ballet

PART THREE: by JAY NORMAN

THE revolt against classicism in the arts eventually brought to ballet all the typical trappings of romanticism—moonlight and sad ruins, wilis and the fatal woman, with a fascinating if morbid undercurrent of sudden death. The statuesque figures of the 18th century gave way to the theme of the mortal hero in love with a wraith.

The stylised female costume was exchanged for a white, be shaped muslin skirt and tight bodies, leaving neck and shoulders bare, pink tights and satin shoes (then unblocked), the costume in fact which, with variations, has become traditional for the classical danseuse. Nationality and place were indicated by varying the headdress or by adding trimmings; coiffures followed the prevailing fashion. Male costume consisted of variations on tights and doublet.

Pointe dancing was introduced early in this century and gave the choreographer opportunities for creating images of floating, gliding and flying, ideally suited to the romantic themes then in vogue. In addition, the substitution of gaslight for candlelight in 1822 made possible much more subtlety in stage lighting.

TAGLIONI

THE Romantic ballet was incarnated in the figure of Marie Taglioni (1803-1884), her lightness, grace and ethereal quality being exactly suited to the new style. In 1832 she appeared in Paris in *La Sylphide*—the first Romantic ballet—and became famous. For nearly twenty years she reigned supreme, her most serious rival being Fanny Elssler who, from contemporary accounts, appears to have been a more sensuous dancer. Other famous danseuses of the heyday of Romanticism were Carlotta Grisi, who created the name part in *Giselle*, Fanny Cerito and Lucile Grahn (a Dane).

Taglioni's best known partner was Jules Perrot, who was also a gifted choreographer. It was he who created the famous *Pas-de-Quatre* for Taglioni, Grisi, Cerito and Grahn in London in 1845. He composed most of the 'pas' for Grisi, his wife, in *Giselle*, although for a long time the whole of the choreography for this ballet was attributed to Coralli. *Giselle*, together with *La Sylphide*, has remained the quintessence of the Romantic



"Moonlight—and sad ruins"
by Judah

ballet and is probably its masterpiece. It was first given at the Paris Opera with Grisi and Perrot in 1841.

The Romantic ballet was well served by critics, the most famous being Theophile Gautier. Our knowledge and appreciation of this period of ballet at the Opera is as coloured by his vivid word pictures as by the lithographs which have become so familiar to us. Ballets of this period also included *La Peri* (with Grisi), *Ondine* (with Cerito), *Le Diable Boiteux* and *La Esmerelda* (with Elssler).

DECLINE

THE exploitation of the danseuse, coupled with an inevitable growth of interest in virtuosity for its own sake, led to the gradual elimination of the danseur, until male characters were, once again, portrayed by women in men's clothes. Other factors in the general decline of ballet in France were probably the poverty of ballet scores, a fresh interest in opera, the rise of the Italian school and the beginnings of a revival in Russia.

REVIVAL

TOWARDS the end of the century many of the danseurs at the Opera were Italian, including Sangalli, who created the name part in "*Sylvia*", Zambelli and Bozacchi, the first Swanhilda. French dancers of this period included Beaugrand and Emma Livry.

The position was much the same in England and although a revival took place at the Alhambra and Empire theatres, the productions were increasingly nothing more than pretty spectacles. Adeline Genée, and Lydia Kyasht from Russia, did much to keep up the interest in classical ballet and to maintain standards.

the second act was in great pain, though the audience was completely unaware of this. She firmly resisted all suggestions that she should not continue, but collapsed after the final curtain, and a few days later was operated on for appendicitis.

She returned to ballet with her hand in splints as the result of a fall—she was ordered to rest because of over-strain—she made a film—her baby daughter, Ailsa, was born—but always, in spite of these interruptions, she returned to ballet.

But the routine and rhythm of a dancer's life cannot be broken in this way, unless she is completely single-minded in her determination to sacrifice everything to the grim struggle to regain what she is constantly losing; and Moira said that she did not feel it would be fair to her husband or daughter to maintain the sense of dedication a ballerina must have.

LAST TIME

She returned to Covent Garden for the last time in February, 1953, and danced a Giselle that had gained so much in dramatic power, and feeling that it won high praise from the most exacting critics. But she strained the muscles of her right ankle so badly that it was over a year before she danced in public again, and it was then with the Festival Ballet for two weeks at Monte Carlo.

In the meantime she had been concentrating on voice production, and made her first appearance in a vocal role when she appeared at a concert as the narrator of *Peter and the Wolf*. It was on this occasion that she was described, somewhat maliciously, in one newspaper report as "blazing with diamonds" when, in actual fact, all she wore were earrings and a simple necklace of old paste, for Moira is sparing in her use of jewellery.

DEBUT

A few weeks later she recited some verses from *Alice in Wonderland* for Festival Ballet; and in September last, made her debut on the legitimate stage. This was as Titania in *The Dream* with the Old Vic Company at the Edinburgh Festival.

All these occasions were but experimental beginnings — for Moira is prepared to serve a long and humble apprenticeship to her art—but they were sincere and full of promise.

Her past achievements have been the result of her own artistic powers, allied to a fine intelligence and capacity for hard work; and there is no reason why she should not be as successful as an actress as she was as a ballerina.

What a delicious Beatrice she might make one day!—the thought almost reconciles one to missing her from ballet!

Artistic Injections Musically Given

SO much talk goes on in the ballet world about art, yet so much artlessness is continually encountered. How often we miss one of the essential ingredients of ballet in many of the London presentations. Ballet is fundamentally the complete marriage of music, dance and decor. As in opera, the conductor is a vital leader in its coming to life. For no matter how creative the choreographer, or inspired the artist, or inventive the composer, the executants are responsible for the true artistic realisation of the whole.

Imagine a great ballet, *Firebird*, danced by a mediocre ballerina, or a brilliant Wakhevitch set hacked by bad scenic painters. Yet many times I have cringed at ballet performances where an indifferent conductor massacres the musical score. We do not want good craftsmen conductors; we desperately need exciting musical interpreters.

For that reason alone the visit to London of the Ballet du Theatre National de l'Opera de Paris was stimulating. To musical director Robert Blot his scores were pulsating particles to be treasured in the framework of the dance.

With this Company *Firebird* was given the rich, biting virile life that Strawinski scored. Through the mystic cloud of orchestral colour every section of the orchestra became part of the dance itself. Nina Vyroubova was getting her inspiration as *Firebird* as much from the music as from Lifar's choreography. Strawinski's aridly intellectual music requires the throbbing bite of dynamic interpretation. Let us be preserved from the anaemic editions so often oozed out to us!

Again, in the ballet *Prelude A*

L'Après-Midi D'Un Faune the limpid prose of Claude Debussy's score was brought out with the tingling glow of musicianship.

If various British ballet companies dance *Prince Igor* with the vigour of bloodless ghouls, can they be blamed when orchestras under uninspired leadership make the music carbon copies of weak whimsy routine? The Paris ballet conductor Blot tackled the Borodin score as if it were jewels for display.

Normally I shudder when Tchaikowsky is hacked by ballet conductors. Yet in *Romeo et Juliette* the tenderness of true romance gently expressed with Slavonic variations of alternating moods, became a living reality.

BASIS

I do not like symphonic works to be used as a basis for ballet. The true symphony is an overwhelming sound picture giving complete realisation to the composer's artistic dream. If the work is fine enough the imagination is stirred, and later saturated, by the flow of music. This overrides any visual byplay on the stage. Though the Paris Ballet's *Le Palais de Cristal* was good Balanchine it was bad Bizet, whose symphony in C was not scored for this purpose. Similarly Schubert's second symphony in B flat is too rich to be the subject for choreographic treatment. Though Harald Lander kept as close to the music as any dance creator could, he was often beaten by the quality of the symphony which sent the senses whirling and demanded the audience's attention. You cannot close your eyes and listen to the exhilarating movement of a romantic symphony and at the same time pay rapt attention to

the dance; and most people at the ballet are romantics!

Of the French composers the French Company gave us a good selection. One of their finest composers, Henri Sauguet, was represented through *Les Mirages*; others were Andre Jolivet (*Guignol et Pandore*), Georges Auric (*Phedre*) and Jeane Leleu (*Nau-teos*).

LEARN

Can we in London learn a lesson from the visitors from Paris?

Speaking to those who control the French company's destiny I was made aware of the importance of music in the life of the Paris Company. The charming Robert Favre Le Bret stressed how vital they consider the conductor's position in ballet. If the Covent Garden orchestra can play so superbly under Blot it only proves the point. The conductors of ballet orchestras in London must be inspired men, not merely talented men of music. Ballet like opera lives or dies in the orchestra pit. The Royal Opera House recognises the operatic claim in appointing Kubelik; let all ballet companies in Britain think similarly in terms of ballet. For dancing alone cannot lift ballet from mere theatrical presentation to a living art form, a delusion under which many one-sided balletomanes foolishly live.

From New York

MOIRA SHEARER replied to the critics who panned her performance and the production in general of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. One critic, according to the actress, "didn't even know that Mendelssohn wrote the music, he thought we'd simply inserted the Overture, really!" She went on "You've got to approach this without any prejudices. I suppose you always remember the bad reviews—they stick in your craw." The programme, incidentally, warns the audience of what they must do in the event of an air raid!

BALLET THEATRE has re-signed Joseph Levine as musical director and Capitol records are releasing two longplays of ballet music conducted by him—including that for *The Capital of the World*.

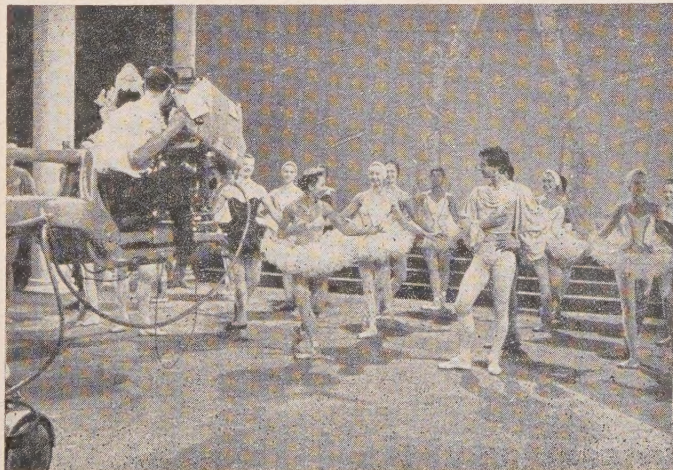
THE "Classical Ballet" of Tatjana Gsovsky will tour the United States next year opening in New York.

THE revived Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo de Serge Denham, now touring the United States, is doing "phenomenally well" with Maria Tallchief as the principal lure and the company name itself "as strong as, say, Sadler's Wells". On one evening so many cast changes were evidenced that, during intermission, a rumour that Massine would dance was rife!

Musician at the Ballet

by
Montague Calman

Paris Opera Ballet (discussed from a musical viewpoint here) photographed by G. B. L. Wilson, taking the final curtain at the telecast of *Etudes* during the company's London season. Micheline Bardin and Michael Renault are nearest the camera.



Books on Ballet

Romantic Ballet in England—Phoenix	25/-
The Conti Story—Collins	8/6
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The Story of the Sadler's Wells Ballet	6/-
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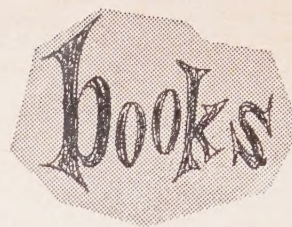
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**IN REVIEW**

The Conti Story. By Joan
 Selby-Lowndes. (Collins, 8s 6d).

"BY permission of the Italia Conti School," are [familiar words after the name of a clever child actor in a theatre programme. The story behind them is less familiar. Italia Conti, the daughter of an Italian opera singer and an English mother, was a small-part actress whose first introduction to the stage had come through Ellen Terry, and who had toured with Benson.

She had a flair for organizing fashionable charity shows, and the skilful handling of children, and was asked by Charles Hawtrey to produce forty children for his new show, *Where The Rainbow Ends*. The great success of this play and her share in it, created the Italia Conti School and before long its pupils—Anton Dolin was one—were featured in every important production requiring children. Each successful year ended in a triumphant revival of *The Rainbow* and eventually she acquired the rights and established it at the Holborn Empire.

When her fortunes were at their peak, the war brought financial ruin. The mass evacuation of children from London closed her school, which was later gutted—and the Holborn Empire—in air raids; and at sixty-five, Italia Conti saw her life's work crumble. With indomitable spirit, she started again, taking *The Rainbow* on tour. When she died in 1946, run-down and over-worked, she saw her school established once more, with her sister and niece to guide new generations of children to stardom.

The author spent four years teaching in the school, and the story is pleasantly told, with sincerity and feeling, but it is a portrait in relief rather than in the round. The rich material of a complex personality, a mixture of idealism and hard common-sense, and a successful but tempestuous life set against the florid background of the world of the theatre has not been sufficiently exploited.

Where

The Neighbours: An Animal Anthology. Compiled and illustrated by Fougasse. (Methuen, 7s 6d).

MOST dancers are fond of animals, especially cats whose lithe grace is so like their own—and most cats seem to fancy dancers! Karsavina, whose home is never without animals, had a beloved white cat called Mourka; theatre cats always find their way to Markova and once, when she was ill and depressed, a small kitten helped her to recovery; Fonteyn's favourites are Siamese, but two ginger kittens named Hamlet and Ophelia, lived in her dressing room at the New. My own two ginger cats always loved to curl up near Moira Shearer, one usually on her lap and the other at her feet.

There are several cats in ballet: the White Cat and her tabby partner in *The Sleeping Beauty*, are the most famous; and there are dogs, an endearing circus horse, Skibine's black and white beauties, and fabulous unicorns, among many others. I remember a wistful monkey in *Children's Corner*, sundry rats and mice, white goats from *Sylvia*, and a famous fox. And then there are birds—blue birds, singing birds, firebirds, as well as doves and ducks, sparrows and a golden cockerel, and, of course, flights of swans.

These thoughts, and the season of good will and compassion are my excuse for recommending this attractively produced and decorated anthology.

All royalties to the Universities' Federation for Animal Welfare, whose aims are in no way controversial, as they are simply concerned with ameliorating the lot of animals in slaughter, traps, or the laboratory.

The selections are grave and gay; there are translations for the Arabic, Greek, and Latin; Dr. Johnson's Hodge appears, and a French Canadian frog:

What a wonderful bird the frog are!

When he walk he fly almost;
 When he sing, he cry almost.
 He ain't got no tail hardly,
 either.

He sit on what he ain't got almost.

* * *

Dancing Out of Bali. By
 John Coast. (Faber, 21s)

THE visit to London of dancers and musicians from the Island of Bali was an outstanding theatrical event of 1952. The excellent production of dances akin to and yet very

the Rainbow Led Italia Conti

different from Indian dancing, the Gamelan orchestra with its mellow bell sounds ; the variety, the tiny glittering girl dancers, quivering and darting like jewelled humming-birds ; the lithe agility of the men ; and the charming stories to which the dances were set, made a unique spectacle that will be long remembered. It was the first time Balinese dancers had been seen in Europe, and in this book the young Englishman who made it possible, tells how it all came about.

He had gone to Bali after the war, and became so enamoured with the charm and friendliness of the island and its people, and the ageless perfection of its dancing, that it became his compelling dream to show this art to the western world. With the aid of his Javanese wife, and the willing co-operation of a talented group of dancers, who accepted him as a brother, he set about realising this. Stimulated by the idea of showing their art over-seas, and encouraged by their new friends, who had taken on the organising and the responsibility for building up and concentrating some of the loveliest dances for western eyes, the company grew into the finest in the Island.

The story is absorbing and well-told, in an easy, vivid style, and with a sense of humour, that brings the whole scene to life. There is a fascinating account of the discovery and training of the exquisite child, Ni Gusti Raka, and her two companions ; of the long, patient and perspiring rehearsals ; of a visit to Mario, the greatest dancer of his day, now middle-aged and retired. A man of infinite dignity and charm, he was, after some difficulty, persuaded to show Coast some of the wonders of his art, and create a new dance for their repertoire, the lovely *Bumblebee Sips Honey*.

The background to all these exciting activities was the new Indonesian Republic, of which Bali was now part, with its atmosphere of social upheaval, private intrigue, and political rivalry ; and the task of organising and taking the company abroad was often heart-breaking. Beset with lack of funds, private quarrels, and political obstruction one can only admire the single-minded purpose with which Coast overcame all difficulties.

The tour in England and America was a triumphant success—in spite of the jealousies, intrigues and misunderstanding that assailed from without this child-like and very lovable company of artists. The tale ends

on a tragic note, for after the return to Bali, their wonderful male dancer, Sampih, was found murdered, three days before he and the company were due to perform before the president of the republic.

There are twenty-four photographs of Bali and the dancers, and, as is usual, with these publishers, the book is beautifully produced.

* * *

The Story of the Sadler's Wells Ballet. By Hugh Fisher. (London : A. & C. Black, 6s).

A SHORT description of the growth of Sadler's Wells. Though somewhat pedestrian in style and, of necessity, much condensed, the main facts are given of all that followed that first meeting in 1926 of two remarkable women, Ninette de Valois and Lilian Baylis. In a postscript there are accounts of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet and the Ballet School, as well as thirty one photographs illustrating the development of the company.

* * *

Ballet Annual No. 9. Edited by Arnold Haskell. (London : A & C. Black, 21s).

ANOTHER year of ballet-going is nearly over and here is *Ballet Annual* once again to record some of its pleasure and pains. We have the usual resumé by Haskell of outstanding events, assisted by Mary Clarke ; ballet in France is covered from several angles ; and there are accounts from Holland, Sweden, Germany, Australia and America. P. W. Manchester evokes nostalgic memories with a description of the Danish Festival, and we hear what friends abroad think of ballet in this country.

Ballet Annual always has attractive end-papers—this time famous Firebirds against a background of shimmering peacock's feathers ; but the colour photograph of Sylvia is a travesty of beautiful Violetta Elvin.

I wish the year could be shown on the spine. Does a bald "No. 7", for instance, readily convey 1953, when a volume is needed for quick reference ? And although 1953 is found on the title page, in actual fact, the events recorded are from 1st August 1951 up to 31st July 1952—work that one out !

Your Child in Ballet. (Ballet Publications, 13a Mortimer Crescent, NW6 ; 2/9).

YOUR Child in Ballet is a Slim booklet to cover such a range but, if it does not

answer a parent's questions (and it does not claim to), it certainly pinpoints for the first time many problems and much of the thinking of parents.

Violetta Elvin has written the foreword and, of the other sections, it is the impatient writing of Peter Craig-Raymond which will find the greatest response among parents. He has, for several years, answered a regular stream of mail from parents and, with this as experience, he comes rapidly to the point without any preamble or niceties.

What he has to say will not please every parent, but I sincerely feel that few parents will not

find the booklet of the greatest use in stating their position clearly.

The author gives money as the basic worry—which it is of course—and writes solely for parents who cannot easily finance their child's training. This is something new in ballet writing where it seems accepted that everyone has a great deal of money and financial problems are passed glibly away.

I would have felt happier had Edith Barking written of several residential schools but, in taking only one as her example, she treats it fully. The school guide should also prove valuable.

K.T.

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Ballet today annual?

... not this year, but the 1954 issues of *Ballet Today* can be purchased at 12/- plus 1/6d. postage and packing; or, singly, at 1/3 post-free. This list only mentions some of the major contents of these issues

January : Is Chamber Ballet The Answer ? . . . The Russians . . . Decor . . . The Violetta Elvin I Know . . . (cover : Michel Renault).

February : Cinedance As I See It . . . Beryl Grey . . . Profile of Jean Babilée . . . The Critic in Ballet . . . (cover : Moyra Fraser).

March : first of the large issues—profiles of Antonio and of Marjorie Tallchief . . . Modern Dance and The Body-Blow . . . Why Am I In Ballet by the Marquis de Cuevas . . . Mona Inglesby writes . . . The Literary Ballet . . . Part one of In Ballet Today which continues through each issue during the year . . . (cover : Sonia Arova).

April : The Arts Council and Ballet . . . Modern Character Dancing . . . profile of Markova—each profile is illustrated by a pencil portrait by June Ryan . . . Balanchine's Nutcracker . . . In Lenin-grad . . . Soviet Choreography . . . The Maryon Lane story . . . The Real Danilova . . . The Martha Graham Review . . . (cover : Valerie Taylor).

May : The Escudero Story . . . Janine Charrat . . . Irene Skorik . . . A Joss drawing . . . Violetta Elvin profile and portrait . . . A Party with Ludmilla Tcherina . . . Modern Dance—an argument . . . (Cover : Markova and Miskovitch).

June : Ice Ballet—an argument . . . Ballet in Canada . . . Too Much Reverence . . . Nadia Nerina . . . The New Ballet . . . Serge Lido's Photograph of the Month . . . Advice to Ballet Mothers . . . A tribute to Marie Rambert . . . Martha Graham : 2 . . . (cover : Diana Adams).

July : Rowena Jackson . . . Choreography in our Time . . . Chamber Ballet in the U.S. . . . Rene Jeanmaire . . . Ballet in Russia Now—first of a series . . . Alexander Grant . . . on the back cover Roland Petit and

Liliane Montevecchi . . . (cover : Anya Linden).

August : Galina Ulanova writes . . . Michael Somes profile and portrait . . . The Ivory Tower . . . The Press And Ballet . . . a tribute to Igor Strawinski . . . (cover : Svetlana Beriosova).

September : Esmeralda in review . . . Istvan Rabovsky by Nadia Nicolaeva-Legat . . . Caryl Brahms on Festival Ballet . . . April Olrich . . . Kenneth Melville . . . Fernau Hall on Karsavina and mime . . . portrait of Svetlana Beriosova . . . Giselle by Richard Austin . . . Filmed Ballet—an argument . . . (cover : Mary Munro).

October : Little Serge—an attack on the Diaghilev-cultists . . . The Wells' Magnificent Firebird . . . June Ryan sketches Mary Munro . . . Violetta Elvin writes her first column . . . The Edinburgh Festival by Susan Lester . . . Jay Norman on Giselle and Tiresias . . . Camille de Rhynal on Lifar . . . Louis Golding on de Basil . . . Ulanova's First Role . . . Toni and Harald Lander . . . Rene Bon by Jean Coquille . . . The 30/- Crime . . . (cover : Belinda Wright).

November : The Paris Opera Ballet . . . Strawinski's Soldat . . . Balanchine's Western . . . Ernest Borneman on Neapolitan Carousel . . . Cin-rama . . . An Italian Tricorne . . . Two appreciations of Belinda Wright . . . Nicholas Beriozoff—and full page photograph of Svetlana Beriosova . . . The Pocket-book Future of Ballet . . . New Worlds for Fonteyn . . . Ballet from the Wings . . . A Digest History of Ballet . . . (cover : Rosemary Lindsay).

December : The Moira Shearer Story . . . Musician at the Ballet . . . Critic Under Fire—Edith Barking questions the editor . . . Anton Dolin . . . A Tribute to Laban . . . (Cover: Beryl Grey).

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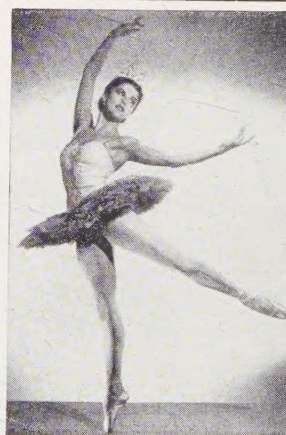
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